**FIRST NATIONS OF NORTHERN MANITOBA**
**CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AUTHORITY**

# CREE NATION CHILD AND FAMILY CARING AGENCY

## SECTION 4 OPERATIONAL REVIEW

Manitoba

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada | Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada

**AUGUST - 2008**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** | | 3 |
| **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** | | 4 |
| 1. | Findings – Governance and Administration | 5 |
| 2. | Findings – Program Delivery Issues | 6 |
| 3. | Findings – Financial Review | 6 |
| 4. | Findings – Staff, Management and Community Consultations | 7 |
| 5. | Conclusion | 8 |
| **CREE NATION CHILD AND FAMILY CARING AGENCY – FINAL REPORT** | | |
| 1. | **INTRODUCTION** | 9 |
| 1.1 | Background to the Evaluation | 9 |
| 1.2 | Evaluation Purpose | 9 |
| 2. | **EVALUATION DESIGN** | 10 |
| 2.1 | Methodology | 10 |
| 2.2 | Data Collection | 10 |
| 2.3 | Limitations | 11 |
| 3. | **AGENCY MANDATE** | 12 |
| 3.1 | Structure of the Agency | 12 |
| 3.2 | Service Model | 13 |
| 4. | **FINDINGS FROM BOARD, COMMUNITY, STAFF CONSULTATIONS AND FILE REVIEWS** | 16 |
| 4.1 | Results/Findings from the Board of Directors | 16 |
| 4.2 | Recommended Actions | 17 |
| 4.3 | Methodology – Service Delivery | 18 |
| 4.4 | Results/Findings File Review | 20 |
| 4.5 | Findings Foster Care File | 21 |
| 4.6 | Interviews with Foster Parents and Community Collaterals | 22 |
| 4.7 | Recommended Actions | 23 |
| 4.8 | Results/Findings from Staff Contact/Interviews | 25 |
| 4.9 | Responses of Administration Staff | 26 |
| 4.10 | Results/findings from Staff/Supervisor Interviews | 27 |
| 4.11 | Results/Findings from Interview with the Executive Director | 35 |
| 4.12 | Summary of Key Findings | 38 |
| 4.13 | Themes from Former Staff | 39 |
| 4.14 | Results/Findings from Collateral Consultations | 40 |
| 4.15 | Summary of Service Delivery/Program Findings | 41 |
| 5. | **FINDINGS FROM THE FINANCIAL REVIEW** | 43 |
| 5.1 | Financial Status | 43 |
| 5.2 | Summary of Key Findings | 44 |
| 5.3 | Administrative Review | 44 |
| 5.4 | Recommended Actions | 47 |
| 6. | **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND AGENCY RESPONSES (June 6, 2008)** | 50 |
| 7. | **ACTION PLAN** | 59 |
| 8. | **APPENDICES** | 64 |

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Section 4 Operational Review (Review) was implemented in consultation with the Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency (Agency) management, staff and Board of Directors, the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority (Northern Authority), the Department of Family Services and Housing (Province), and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The Review commenced on October 1, 2007 and the data collection phase was completed in December, 2007. The goal of the Review was to assist the Agency in responding to a series of concerns from former staff and community personnel regarding service delivery, finance and governance matters, as well as, staffing and management issues.

An examination was also done on the organizational structure to ensure that the structure best reflects the needs of the member communities and management and staff. The Review process also contained an extensive engagement via interviews and questionnaires with a wide array of people, including the management and staff of the Agency, former employees, foster families, service providers and key community collaterals. This data which evolved from this process is included in various segments of this report.

This report is designed to serve as a snapshot in time of the functioning of the Agency as well as providing a blueprint for the Agency to consider making changes within the organization. The preliminary findings of the Review were forwarded to the Agency in November, 2007. The draft final report was completed on January 30, 2008. This date was followed by a series of meetings with Agency management, the Board and members of the review team. Following this consultation process, final recommendations were developed and time lines set to implement the recommendations. The final meeting with the Agency to Review the report and recommendations was held on June 6, 2008.

The review team would like to extend thanks the management, staff and the various community collateral contacts for their time and involvement.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 27, 2007 a decision was confirmed to conduct a Review of the Agency. It was also agreed at this time that the Review would consist of staff from INAC, the Northern Authority and the Province.

The terms of reference for the Review were set out and included three specific areas:

- administration/governance issues;
- compliance with standards and service delivery practices; and
- a review of financial transactions related to child maintenance, staff expense accounts and payments to foster parents, support workers and residential care facilities.

The Review commenced in October, 2007 and an interim report was provided to the Executive Director in December, 2007. The draft final report was completed on January 30, 2008 and was hand delivered to the Executive Director on said date. A series of scheduled meetings between the Agency management, the Board and four members of the review team were held in February - March 2008 and a session was held in The Pas on April 16, 2008. Correspondence was forwarded to the Board Chair on April 18, 2008 requesting a response and action plan to deal with identified issues related to governance and financial transactions. A response was received from the Board Chair on May 5, 2008 which did not address the issues and recommendations. A subsequent meeting with the Executive Director and the Board was held on June 6, 2008 to review the final recommendations.

### Review Methodology

The Review process included a series of activities, among them being:

- an examination of relevant documents such as policy manuals, board meeting minutes and annual reports;
- a brief study of the organizational structure of the Agency;
- a review of any other external evaluations/studies completed on the Agency during the tenure of the present Executive Director; and
- the development of a set of questionnaires to guide the review team in their interview sessions with Board members, management, staff, former staff and community collateral contacts.

The data collection phase of the Review consisted of the following tasks:

- a review of Agency By-Laws and related policy and procedures manuals related to administration and governance;
- the completion of a series of interviews with current and former staff and management, Board members and community collateral contacts;
- a review of a random selection of program files including but not limited to children-in-care, family services, foster care, child protection and intake services so as to determine compliance to service standards; and
- an examination of financial statements

Prior to the data collection phase, meetings were held with Agency staff in the main office at the Opaskwayak Cree Nation and with management and staff at the Winnipeg outreach office. The purpose of these meetings was to provide an outline of the Review process to staff, the rationale for the Review, the expected time lines for completion, the expectations of management and staff in the working relationship with the review team members and to respond to any queries from staff. Contact was also made with former staff of the Agency as well as key community contacts. It is noted that more than seventy people were provided with interview questionnaires or interviewed in person by the review team members. The feedback received from this wide array of Agency and community personnel was a key component of the Review process. This information was linked to the results from the file reviews and the examination of by-law materials and the policy and procedures manuals.

## 1. Findings - Governance and Administration

The main office of the Agency is located on the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. The Agency has sub-offices in Winnipeg, Thompson, Lynn Lake and six communities, Chemawawin First Nation, Grand Rapids First Nation, Mathias Colomb First Nation, Mosahiken Cree Nation, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation and Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation. The Marcel Colomb First Nation (Lynn Lake) has a representative attending Board meetings and at some point the By-Laws will have to be changed to include this community as a full and legal voting member.

An examination of the various documents indicated that the Agency has written By-Laws which are consistent with the Child and Family Services Authorities Act. The Agency Board has letters of incorporation, liability insurance, a minute book detailing Board meetings, a Board of Directors Manual which includes conflict-of-interest guidelines and Board membership, a schedule of training sessions for Board members and a five year operational/strategic plan.

During the initial phase of the Review, the Executive Director forwarded a copy of the organizational structure and it would appear that this document is being revised as the structure no longer meets the needs of the Agency. A second document related to the structure was received on April 4, 2008. This document made reference to several proposed changes as well as a request for additional staff. It was agreed that the changes to the organizational structure would be placed on hold pending the completion of the Review.

The supervision being provided to the staff in the sub-offices was identified as inadequate and inconsistent as well as the decision making process. It was noted by several staff that decisions made at the sub-office level are often changed by management with little or no consultation. The documents which were made available to the review team did include relevant material as to how Board members are reimbursed for their time working on Agency business. The information and commentary on this issue is included in this Review report. An item which is silent in the manuals relates to the hiring of contract employees by the Agency. There is a recruitment and hiring process for permanent positions but term employees appear to be hired at the discretion of the Executive Director and senior staff. This practice has led to allegations of nepotism. Some of the respondents interviewed commented on this issue and it appears to have an impact on staff recruitment and

retention. Some concerns were expressed about the hiring of untrained staff and the potential risk issues in dealing with complex family/child cases which are referred to the Agency.

## 2. Findings - Program Delivery Issues

The Designated Intake System (DIA) was identified as a service system which is in dire need of a review as staff commented on the inability to access critical information in a timely manner. Gaps were noted in the transfer of information from the main office to the sub-offices on intake cases and the concern was expressed that children and families may be at risk. The review of files and the comments provided by staff at all levels of the organization confirmed the need to revamp the intake system and ensure that it is appropriately resourced and funded to provide a quality service.

Service gaps were also identified in the ongoing work with children in care, children in foster care and cases being handled by the Child Abuse Unit. The reasons given for these gaps were excessive caseload/workload demands, lack of resources and community supports, the high turnover of staff and difficulties associated in the retention of staff and the lack of clerical and administrative support. There is a perception that management and Board members are well compensated, leaving minimal finances for direct service work with children and families.

Staff across all levels of the Agency did refer to caseload and workload issues that impacted the ability of the Agency to meet the requests for services from the member communities. Several efforts were made to gain a clear concise picture of this statistical information but there was some uncertainty over the validity of the numbers. There is a need for the Agency to engage in a discussion with INAC about the funds which could be made available for the Agency to complete a self-evaluation. This initiative should include an analysis of the caseload and workload data.

## 3. Findings - Financial Review

The financial review shows that although the Agency's overall financial status is stable, they had a current year deficit of ($374,567) at March 31, 2007. It was identified that the Agency's allocation method used for operating expenditures needs to be adjusted to reflect the increase to their provincial caseload. A review of the child maintenance expenditures was done on 30% of the Agency's total children-in-care files or 135 files, resulting in the requirement for some follow-up on approximately 30 files. The requested data was provided and the follow up was completed. Other than some filing issues, this portion of the financial review went very well. There were deficiencies identified during the administrative component of the financial review which show that certain administrative policies require additions and/or adjustments to specific areas such as; company credit cards, board and employee travel per diems, hiring of contracted staff and employee loans/advances. There were also other items identified such as a purchase of a van and out of province travel that raised concerns as to business decisions made at the Board level.

## 4. Findings - Staff, Management and Community Consultations

A key component of the Review was to engage past and present employees in the process. A series of questionnaires were developed for the purposes of interviewing staff, management, Board members, former employees, community members and community collaterals. The collective comments received from the Board members covered a range of issues. A number of themes emerged from the responses and they included comments to the effect that the Agency was functioning well and meeting the key objectives and goals which are set out in their mandate; members of the Board felt that their role was to direct the activities of the Agency to ensure compliance to service standards and to have policies and procedures in place to guide the ongoing work of staff. The Board identified concerns related to caseload/workload stresses being experienced by staff and the lack of funding for programs.

These responses seemed to be at odds with the comments of management and staff wherein it was noted that very little was known about the priorities of the Board, there was minimal interaction between Agency staff and the Board and there was a lack of information about the appointment and recruitment of Board members.

The responses of the Agency management and staff were varied and included some of the following comments: most staff were clear on the mission/goals of the Agency and support the mandate; most staff in direct services and administration confirmed a degree of satisfaction with the orientation and training provided to them; direct services staff expressed some level of frustration with the complex and difficult cases being assigned to them and their need for regular supervision to assist them in coping with the high demands and expectations

Contact was initiated with a number of former employees who had left the Agency over the past two years. The total of thirty-one staff had left the Agency during the time period of January 1, 2006 to September, 2007. Six staff were seconded back to the Province, six staff resigned to take another position in child and family services, four staff left the Agency due to family/personal issues; four staff were terminated due to their work performance; three staff moved out of the province; three staff resigned for personal reasons; two staff were laid off due to financial constraints; one staff person was terminated due to criminal charges; one staff left as the term position expired and one staff left to return to school.

A wide range of responses were received from the former staff of the Agency, among them being: there was inadequate orientation and supervision provided to staff; the staff were unable to manage their caseloads in an effective manner; the hiring practices were a concern and there was the feeling that family relationships took precedence over knowledge and expertise. Abuse of finances by the Board and management was noted and a negative impact on children and families and poor communication existed among all levels of the organization and minimal attempts were made to correct the problem.

A complete summary of these responses are found in the body of this report.

It is noted that comment was made on occasion that there was a concern that this Review would not result in any substantive changes within the organization. Two previous quality

assurance reviews (March 1996 and October 2001) did not lead to any meaningful changes within the Agency.

A series of 21 recommendations have been identified in this Review.

It is imperative that these recommendations be dealt with in a timely manner. An action plan will be developed to assist the Agency and the three stakeholders in implementing the recommendations.

## 5. Conclusion

This Review is a significant milestone in Manitoba's child welfare system as it is the first time that the Province, INAC and the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Authority have collaboratively undertaken a review on a child welfare agency.

This spirit of collaboration will continue as the Northern Authority works with leadership, communities, and the Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency to develop an action plan which will meet the specific needs of the CNCFS agency and the communities which it serves.

# CREE NATION CHILD AND FAMILY CARING AGENCY – FINAL REPORT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Evaluation

On August 24, 2007 the Northern Authority received correspondence from the Assistant Deputy Minister, Family Services and Housing, Province of Manitoba advising that the Child Protection Branch had received a written complaint from former employees of the Agency. The allegations made in the letter of complaint included concerns about the misuse and mismanagement of Agency funds, patronage, nepotism, and a chronic failure to provide basic service delivery according to provincial standards.

The content of the above noted correspondence was provided to the Chairperson of the Board of the Northern Authority on August 24, 2007 and to the Executive Director of the Agency on August 24, 2007. The Northern Authority received correspondence from the Chair of the Board of the Agency on August 27, 2007 advising of support for the Review.

The above stakeholders took these allegations seriously and on August 27, 2007 a decision was made to conduct a Review of the Agency. It was also agreed that the review team would consist of staff from the Northern Authority, INAC and the Province. The review process was discussed and a work plan was developed on September 6, 2007. There were meetings held with Agency staff to provide information on the Review on September 10, 2007 (main office) and on September 12, 2007 (Winnipeg based staff).

### 1.2 Evaluation Purpose

The terms of reference consisted of a focus on three specific areas, namely:

- A review of administration, governance issues, including but not limited to Board remuneration, and current policies regarding Board expenses, staffing levels, hiring practices and related personnel policies and procedures;
- Compliance with standards and services delivery practices; and
- A review of the approved mechanism in place for financial transactions related to child maintenance, staff expense accounts, foster parents, support workers and facilities.

## 2. EVALUATION DESIGN

### 2.1 Methodology

- Access/review copies of Annual Reports;
- Review the organizational structure of the Agency;
- Evaluate the use of information included in the Agency's policy and procedures manuals;
- Review any other external evaluations/reviews/studies completed on the Agency under the present Executive Director;

### 2.2 Data Collection

- Review a random selection of program files including but not limited to children-in-care, family services, foster care, child protection and intake services so as to determine compliance to standards;
- Examine audited financial statements and management letters and track Agency approval mechanisms for payments of accounts;
- Conduct a series of key informant interviews with current and former staff. These staff would have been employed during the present Executive Director's tenure. A questionnaire would also be provided to the Board of Directors for response;
- Read and examine Agency By-Laws and related policy and procedures manuals.

**Review Activities**

Correspondence dated September 19, 2007 was sent from the Northern Authority to the Executive Director of the Agency, INAC, and the Province. The letter confirmed the terms of reference and the roles/responsibilities of each of the stakeholders in the Review. It was noted that:

- The Northern Authority would examine the administration and governance issues, including but not limited to Board remuneration, staffing policies, hiring practices and related personnel policies and procedures;
- The Province will review the various programs and service delivery practices and determine compliance with standards; and
- INAC will review the approval mechanisms in place for financial transactions related to children-in-care, staff expense accounts and related financial matters.

On September 14, 2007 the Northern Authority received correspondence from INAC confirming their tasks for the Review. In the letter, reference made to the fact that INAC will be reviewing similar documents as the Northern Authority. This issue was discussed and it further noted that the letter from INAC was a standard response letter and it was noted that there may be some overlap in the Review of the documents related to governance and administration.

A schedule was confirmed for the Review and the time lines were as follows: INAC from October 1 - 4, 2007; Northern Authority from October 10 - 12, 2007; and the

Province from October 16 - 18, 2007. There were additional file reviews and interviews completed during the week of November 26 – 29, 2007.

A meeting was held at the office of the Northern Authority on November 1, 2007 to discuss the preparation of a report on the interim findings. In attendance were representatives from INAC, the Province and the Northern Authority. A brief discussion was held on the format to be used to complete the interim report. A final meeting was held on December 17, 2007 with the key stakeholders to finalize the format for the Review. It was decided that a draft final report would be completed by January 28, 2008 and the report would include review data from INAC, the Province and the Northern Authority. This report would be discussed with the Board of Directors and the Executive Director of the Agency prior to completing a series of recommendations. The draft final report was completed on January 30, 2008. Three packages of information in response to the draft final report were received from the Agency. Meetings were held with the Agency Board, management and the review team on March 18, 2008 and April 16, 2008 to discuss recommendations and an action plan. A letter was sent to the Board Chair on April 18, 2008 requesting a written response to all the recommendations. The Agency's response was received on May 5, 2008. A final meeting to discuss the recommendations was held on June 6, 2008 with the Executive Director and the Board.

### 2.3 Limitations

A series of limitations for this Review can be noted. The reviewers were dependent on data from program files provided by Agency staff. There is no assurance that all relevant documentation was available due to filing backlog in the regional and local offices. It was also identified that documentation contained in the regional office file may not be on the working file at the local offices or vice-versa. It is also noted that the review team was unable to visit each of the six communities receiving services from the Agency: in-person contact was only made with the staff at the main office, Thompson and at the Winnipeg outreach office. Telephone contact was made with staff from Grand Rapids, Mosahiken First Nation, Sapotaweyak First Nation, Chemawawin First Nation and the Flin Flon and Swan River sub-offices. The reviewers were unable to interview a number of former employees, although several approaches were made for contact. Some of the former employees who were interviewed as part of the Review had left the Agency under negative circumstances and their commentary reflected these experiences and views. Another issue/concern which surfaced during the preliminary meetings with the Executive Director centered on the fact that the Northern Authority was excluded from the meeting with former staff which resulted in the decision to launch the Review. These circumstances leading into the Review created an atmosphere of tension and anxiety among Agency management and staff and these feelings were observed during interactions with management and staff.

## 3. AGENCY MANDATE

The Agency was mandated on December 10, 1993, and established pursuant to Section 6 (14) and 6 (1) of the Child and Family Services Act. Section 6 (14) enables the Province to enter into Agreements with an "Indian Band" or Tribal Council and the Government of Canada for the incorporation by the band or council to provide services under the Act. The Child and Family Services Authorities Act passed in November 2003 and the Agency was named the DIA for a specific geographic area.

### 3.1 Structure of the Agency

The main office of the Agency is located at the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. The Agency has sub-offices in Winnipeg, Flin Flon, Lynn Lake, Swan River, Thompson, Chemawawin First Nation (Easterville), Grand Rapids First Nation, Marcel Colomb First Nation, Mathias Colomb First Nation, Mosahiken Cree Nation (Moose Lake), Sapotaweyak Cree Nation (Shoal River), and Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation (Indian Birch). The Board of Directors consists of one person as appointed by the Chief and Council from each member community. The Board minutes also note that a representative from the Marcel Colomb First Nation is also attending Board meetings. The powers and duties of the Board members are spelled out in the By-Laws. The length of term of a Board member is at the discretion of the First Nation that the Board member represents. In the event that a vacancy occurs on the Board, the Chief and Council of the member community that has lost representation may select another person to the Board.

The Executive Director is responsible for the overall planning and development and review of programs and services and the staffing and financial management of the Agency. The Agency has nine program managers in the organizational structure. Of the total staff complement for the Agency (71), 36 staff are employed at the main office.

The following is a snapshot of the staffing component for the Agency:

- Regional Office - 36 staff
- Winnipeg Sub-Office - 9 staff
- Mosakahiken Cree Nation - 3 staff
- Chemawawin - 3 staff
- Grand Rapids First Nation - 3 staff
- Mathias Colomb - 5 staff
- Wuskwi Sipihk - 3 staff
- Sapotaweyak - 3 staff
- Provincial workers - 6 staff (includes Flin Flon, Swan River, Lynn Lake and Thompson) **Total staff = 71**

### 3.2 Service Model

An organizational chart of the Agency was presented to the review team and this document contained the following management positions:

- Executive Director;
- Director of Finance and Administration;
- Designated Intake Coordinator;
- Operations Manager for Mathias Colomb First Nation;
- Winnipeg Unit Coordinator;
- Child and Family Services Unit Coordinator;
- Legal Support Services Coordinator;
- Adoptions Coordinator;
- Child Protection Unit Coordinator; and
- Resource Coordinator.

Regional workers are located in each of the sub-offices as follows:

- **Mosakahiken** – 1 senior social worker, 1 child and family services worker and an administrative assistant;
- **Chemawawin** – 2 child and family services workers; 1 administrative assistant;
- **Grand Rapids** – 1 senior social worker; 1 community social worker; 1 administrative assistant;
- **Mathias Colomb** – 1 operations manager, 3 child and family services workers; 1 administrative assistant;
- **Wuskwi Sipihk** – I senior social worker; 1 local worker; 1 administrative assistant
- **Sapotaweyak** – 1 senior social worker; I local worker; I administrative assistant;
- **Winnipeg** – 1 unit coordinator; 6 child and family services workers; 1 administrative assistant; I shared position with the Keewatinook Wechihiwewin Agency; and
- **Provincial/Regional Workers – Swan River** – I child and family services worker; 1 administrative assistant; **Flin Flon** – I child and family services worker; **Lynn Lake -** 1 child and family services worker; **Thompson** – I child and family services worker; 1 administrative assistant.

A series of documents were made available to assess the current staffing levels of the Agency. The documents included a staffing list (date unknown), the By-Laws and a Personnel Policy Manual dated February 21, 2006. The Manual included sections on:

- The organizational structure;
- Hiring policies and practices;
- Employee conduct;
- Hours of work;
- Salaries and benefits;
- Work related travel;

- Leave;
- Disciplinary action;
- Conflict of interest guidelines; and
- Roles/responsibilities of the personnel committee.

**The Appendix to the Manual included sections on:**

- Use of cellular telephones;
- Policy statement on staff fostering;
- Financial code of ethics;
- Social work code of ethics;
- Confidentiality;
- Harassment Free Workplace; and
- Agency code of ethics.

**Staff Resignations - January, 2006 – September 14, 2007**

| Reason | # | % | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Seconded back to Province | 6 | 19 | 6 |
| Resigned to take another job in CFS | 6 | 19 | 6 |
| Personal/ family Issues | 4 | 13 | 4 |
| Terminated-work performance | 4 | 13 | 4 |
| Moved out of Province | 3 | 10 | 3 |
| Resigned-personal reasons | 3 | 10 | 3 |
| Laid off-financial issues of Agency | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| Terminate-criminal charges | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Term position expired | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Back to school | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| **Total** | **31** | **100** | **31** |

***Note: An updated list of the staffing positions is included in the appendices. Information is also provided on the positions requested by the Agency as well as the staff-supervisor ratio.**

## Governance Issues:

| Category | Specific Components | Sources of Information | Indicators |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Corporate** | Corporate Structure | Written By-Laws | CNCFCA has By-Laws which are consistent with the Authorities Act and other requirements. |
| | Liability Insurance | Incorporation Papers | All legal documents are up to date; Incorporation -1993; Insurance-June 1, 2007-June 1, 2008. |
| | Conflict of Interest | Minute Book, Board of Directors Manual, General By-Laws | Recognition in the By-Laws of guideline on conflict of interest (article XVI). CNCFCA Personnel Policy manual –February 21, 2006 contains guidelines on conflict of interest for staff (page 57). |
| | Organizational Structure | Document with the present organizational structure | Determine if the staffing and organizational structure are suitable, appropriate and consistent with the requirements of CNCFCA. |
| | Operational and/or Strategic Plan | Document Review | CNCFCA has a five year strategic plan; document revised on April 12, 2007. |
| **Board of Directors** | Board Operations | Board members and positions | List of Board members included in board minutes of July 18, 2007. |
| | | How board members are appointed | Reference to appointments is included in the CNCFCA Board of Directors Manual of General By-Laws. |
| | | Copy of minutes of Board Meetings | Board minutes are included in the minute book. Marcel Colomb First Nation attends the Board meetings. |
| | | Copy of Board handbook | No copy of Board handbook was available. |
| | | Board orientation plan. | Board members provided a list of orientation sessions. |
| | | A written Board training plan | No access to record of training plan. Reference is made in the minutes of July 18, 2007 to training for the Board members; they provided a list of four training sessions These included Board By-Laws, Liability Issues, Human Resources, Employment Law and Differential Response. |
| | | Remuneration to Board members | Verbal presentation given by the Executive Director. Review done of written documents. |

## 4. FINDINGS FROM BOARD, COMMUNITY, STAFF CONSULTATIONS AND FILE REVIEWS

### 4.1 Results/Findings from the Board of Directors

The questionnaires for the Board were provided to the Executive Director on October 10, 2007 as she was meeting with the Board of Directors on October 12, 2007. On October 15, 2007 a copy of the completed questionnaire was received by the Northern Authority. The document had a written note advising that the responses to the questionnaire were done on a collective basis by the Board of Directors.

The responses from the Board include:

- The Board noted that the key objectives/ goals of the Agency were to reduce the number of children in care, develop adequate foster care resources for children, encourage the use of extended family for placements and to upgrade and enhance the work skills of staff;
- The role of the Board is to direct the operations of the Agency to ensure compliance to standards and to have policies and procedures in place to guide the work of staff;
- Board membership is made up of local leadership appointed by the Chief and Council of each First Nation;
- Board decisions are made by motion at the regular meeting and these motions are forwarded to Agency management for implementation;
- Board accountability to the respective communities occurs through yearly audited financial statements, annual meetings and reports to the community;
- Confidentiality issues are handled by the Board by in camera sessions at regular meetings. Also, each of the Board members has signed an oath of confidentiality;
- The Board members have been provided with orientation/training sessions with workshops on their roles and responsibilities, the Child and Family Services Act, Employment Standards and the Differential Response Initiative;
- Board members felt that the training sessions were beneficial in that they were able to develop a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities;
- It was noted that the Board meetings did follow the format of Roberts Rules of Order ie. develop an agenda, adopt the agenda, review minutes of the previous meeting, maintain running records of the previous meetings et al;
- The Board members described their relationship with the management and staff of the Agency as "excellent;"
- Some of the personal strengths identified by the Board members were as follows: members come from a variety of backgrounds and possess a commitment to the needs of children; they also have leadership skills and are knowledgeable about local issues in their home communities;
- The Board members were aware of the review of the Agency and they indicated that they requested and supported the review plan; and
- Two specific issues/concerns identified by the Board included caseload/workload stresses being experienced by staff and the lack of funding for programs.

## 4.2 Recommended Actions

- There is a need to implement a plan to re-structure the Board. There is a need to reconsider the process in which members are appointed to the Board and ensure that there is a succession plan in place to bring on new members to the Board from the six communities. Three year terms could be staggered to allow for new members as well as ensure that not every Board member's term expires at the same time.

- There is a need to expand the Board membership to include full participation from the Marcel Colomb First Nation. The response document from the Agency dated March 26, 2008 includes Marcel Colomb First Nation in the Board structure.

- Board meetings should be held on a scheduled basis. It is recommended that the Board meet on a monthly basis and that these sessions be held within the Province of Manitoba.

- It is recommended that the Agency's Constitution be amended to recognize that an honorarium is paid to the "Directors" of the Board for their time. The present per diem allocation for Board members must be changed. The proposed payment schedule will include an honorarium not to exceed $200.00 per day; travel allowance which includes meals, incidentals and accommodations, which are to be set at the same rates established for Agency employees and .55 cents per kilometer for mileage.

- Previous reviews of the Agency have made note of the fact that program and service decisions, including case planning and case management, must avoid any perceived conflict of interest by staff, local committees, Chiefs and Councils and the Board of the Agency. A new statement is required to confirm this objective.

- The Agency's response document dated April 4, 2008 makes reference of the plan to hire an additional 21 staff; 17 of these positions will be assigned to direct services and 4 positions will be assigned administrative functions. There is no reference to a plan by the Agency to balance caseloads among staff. It is noted that there is a wide variance among the supervisory responsibilities of the Coordinators (see Appendix B). There is a plan to establish a new Human Resources Unit with a training technician. There is no job description attached to this position. There is no confirmation as to whether the Agency will accept and enforce the Provincial Workforce Qualification Standard for the hiring of new staff. This standard (effective January, 2006) allows for the hiring of BSW graduates and other defined equivalencies into frontline child protection positions (known as Field Service 2 or FS2) as well as individuals who have sufficient training, as well as life experiences, cultural background, solid community standing, etc. into lesser qualifications (known as Field Services 1 or\FS1) with additional supports and training required to bring up the staff person to FS2 qualifications; and

- The hiring policy of the Agency should specifically state that any contract position for less than 3 months can be filled via a direct appointment; any contract position in excess of 3 months must be advertised and the Agency will have a hiring board to complete the recruitment process. Any staff member on the hiring committee related to the applicant must exclude themselves from the committee.

### 4.3 Methodology - Service Delivery

Child Protection, Children in Care, Voluntary Family Services and the Expectant Parent Services Program

**Purpose:**

To determine the degree of compliance with Case Management and Program Standards and service delivery practices.

To analyze the degree of compliance, develop recommendations and an action plan to address service delivery compliance issues.

**Method:**

Fifty-eight files were randomly selected and all documentation effective January 2005 was examined according to case management standards.

**Intake Information:**

- Utilization of intake module
- Definition of presenting problem
- Risk Assessment
- Action/intervention
- Recommended plan
- Supervisory review

**Assessment:**

- Family assessment
- Child assessment
- Supervisory review

**Child Protection Investigations:**

- Child seen
- Risk Assessment
- Medical examination
- Police referral
- Agency intervention appropriate
- Referral to abuse committee
- Supervisory review

**Planning:**

- Service plan
- Safety plan
- Care plan for children in care
- Supervisory review

**Service provision:**

- Contact with children in care
- Contact with family
- Contact with service collaterals
- Visits with family for children in care
- Age of majority planning
- Supervisory review

**Evaluation:**

- Service plans reviewed/revised
- Care plans (for children in care) reviewed/revised
- Supervisory review

**Legal Status:**

- Legal documentation on file
- Documentation meets time requirements

**Service Completion:**

- Closing summary or transfer summary
- Service needs met
- Risk reduced
- Supervisory review

In addition to data collected from file reviews, interviews with collateral agencies, resource providers and key personnel were conducted.

**Data Collection:**

Files reviewed:

- 13 Protection files
- 33 Children in Care files
- One Voluntary Family Services file
- One Expectant Parent Services file
- 10 Foster Care files
- Information obtained from interviews

**Total: 58 files**

## 4.4 Results/Findings File Review

- Limited file documentation on a majority of the files reviewed.
- Many of the files contained documentation which appeared to be misfiled in that it was not chronological or not in the sections it was supposed to be.
- Provincial Intake Module forms appeared to be used on an inconsistent basis in the files viewed. The Agency intakes were used more often with some files displayed no intake forms.
- Safety and risk assessments were not evident in the majority of the files reviewed.
- Comprehensive family assessments or child assessments were not evident in the majority of the files reviewed.
- There was some evidence of collateral assessments for children in care on files (ie. school reports, reports from Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre, Marymound and MacDonald Youth Services). However, documentation surrounding worker participation in these meetings was not apparent in the majority of the files.
- The majority of the files reviewed did not have updated case notes on file. These files had the most recent file dictation dated in 2006.
- Winnipeg sub-office is managing child in care cases, however, the corresponding protection files are in The Pas office. There was little documentation on file to indicate that these protection files are being case managed.
- Winnipeg office has identified issues surrounding the hiring of seconded employees. These employees were described as being 'specialized' in being employed and trained in a specific area, (ie. family re-unification or intake, and not accustomed to doing generic social work). This apparently resulted in differing philosophies regarding workload expectations.
- There appears to be a backlog of overall filing within the Agency. Workers were observed to be doing their own filing duties.
- Workers had been, up to very recently, expected to conduct their own criminal record checks and they are reportedly required to contact the main office to access foster home placements and support workers.
- It is evident in file reviews that it is the current practice of the Agency to create separate files for child abuse investigations. This file is apart from the protection and child in care files resulting in fragmentation of services.
- Child abuse files indicate that investigations appear to be responded to in accordance with program standards, however, there are gaps in regards to assessment, service planning and closure.
- There appeared to be duplication of file recordings in many of the files. This includes correspondence, collateral reports, and contact recordings.
- At least three children in care cases have duplicate files. One such file contained different documents and recordings than the original file.
- Child needs assessments (special rate assessments) appeared to be documented on the majority of children in care files with some containing limited planning information. These are completed in collaboration with the resource supervisor and most were completed within Agency set timelines.
- At least three child in care files contained factual errors surrounding the child in care. This included an error in birthdates and two errors surrounding the

diagnoses of the child (ie. child was said to be Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and Clinic for Alcohol and Drug Exposed Children report stated there was no such diagnosis).

- There appeared to be minimal documentation regarding service planning other than the child needs assessments.
- There appeared to be minimal documentation to demonstrate a supervisory review of the case management process.
- File reviews indicated that case management decisions were being made, (i.e. moving a child, child returning home). However, there is limited documentation in files to indicate how these case management decisions were made and how risk was assessed prior to case decisions being implemented.
- File reviews indicated workers had made questionable case decisions, which appeared to be subjectively based rather than on best practice principles.
- The expectant parent services files were not case referenced as being over the age of 18. Discussions with staff revealed that there is confusion and lack of understanding regarding program and administrative requirements with respect to expectant parent services and standards.

### 4.5 Findings - Foster Care File Review

- Minimal documentation/case notes were on file.
- Limited contact notes/contact recorded by foster care workers with foster parents.
- Some information on all files was incorrectly filed (not chronological, information relating to other cases – misfiled).
- Many files have not updated the placement details to reflect which child is in the foster home, if any. In one case a child was named on the license but not in the file. The majority of the files did not indicate the rate or the level of the child placed.
- No support contract/ service agreements were found on file, however, in one file the case notes/correspondence indicated that the service was in place.
- No information about alternate care providers found on file.
- Quality regarding home study documentation varied. Some were very comprehensive and some had very limited information.
- Specific workers tended to be over represented in the completion of tasks (i.e. completion of home studies, follow up and support to foster parents and contact notes).
- "No orientation" was documented on the majority of the fostering checklists on file.
- Majority of files did not identify any training completed relative to taking the fostering role.
- Many incomplete or outdated criminal record checks, child abuse registry checks and prior contact checks.
- Criminal records – Frequently no documentation on file to support the assessment of suitability to foster (ie. for impaired driving convictions, no record of alcohol assessment of other details on file).
- No foster parent signatures were on home study reports.
- Up to date medical reference letters were not consistently filed.

*"Foster Care Licensing and Re-licensing of Agency Foster Home Criminal Records Guidelines"*

This document outlines the standards with respect to licensing and re-licensing of foster homes. The standards with respect to criminal records do not adequately ensure assessment of suitability to foster.

### 4.6 Interviews with Foster Parents and Collateral Agencies

**Foster Parents:**

- Lack of contact with foster parents by Agency staff. Contact with the Agency was primarily initiated by the foster parents
- Foster parents do not present a clear understanding their roles and the expectations of the Agency.
- Foster parents described feeling overwhelmed and unable to access support from the Agency when they needed it most.
- Majority foster parents interviewed described themselves as caring for very high needs children without any Agency supports, training or supervision. In two cases the end result was a change of placement for the child.
- The majority of foster parents caring for high needs children indicated that there was no Agency planning and/or assessments and no foster parent involvement in planning meetings/conferences. Foster parents interviewed stated they were not provided with adequate information about the child that was placed with them. In one case the provider was a single parent unprepared to care for a pair of siblings who were abusing solvents and perpetrating acts of violence. The foster parent claimed to be unaware of these issues prior to placement.
- At least one foster parent described situations where Agency workers gave them last minute information regarding potential placements and training opportunities. They were given minimal information and then pressured to make decisions immediately or risk losing the opportunity.
- The majority of foster parents stated they had experienced problems with the Agency concerning finances. The problems expressed relate directly to foster parents not being informed about the process or Agency expectations.
- All foster parents stated they were unaware of an Agency appeal process available to them if they were to have any concerns.
- When asked to rate the support that they received from the Agency utilizing a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the lowest and ten being the highest; the average rating was 3.

### 4.7 Recommended Actions

- The Agency response document dated March 26, 2008, did not address the issues identified regarding Intake Services. The Intake Report dated April 2, 2008 indicated that there are 403 intake cases currently open and ready for conclusion. It is noted that there was a plan to have some staff attend the training session on Intake April 29 -30, 2008. This was a positive undertaking for the short-term. A work plan needs to be established that will address the backlog of intake cases. The work plan should comment on the present intake cases that require further assessment services from the DIA (Designated Intake Agency), as well as, cases that require transfer to ongoing services and cases that can be closed/concluded. The work plan also needs to include a statement on the resources required to complete the work on the backlog, as well as a projected time frame for completion. There should also be a plan to include strategies to ensure ongoing management of intakes to guard against a further backlog of cases.

- There is a need to have a formal plan in place to address the issues identified regarding file documentation. It was suggested by the Executive Director that case documentation was a training issue. It is recommended that training on file documentation should be delivered to all Agency staff within the next 3-6 months. This training should include documentation requirements regarding intake, safety and risk assessment, contact recordings, assessment, case planning, case transfers and case closing. It is further recommended that the Agency identify a plan that will address the ongoing monitoring and review of the documentation to ensure compliance with service standards.

- The Agency response document, dated March 26, 2008, did not comment on the issue of lack of safety and risk assessments in the files. Risk assessment is considered to be an ongoing, continuous process in child protection work. Provincial case management standards clearly identify the need to conduct both safety and risk assessments with protection cases and specify response times for Agency intervention. The Intake Module guides the worker through the safety and risk assessment process. It is expected that a work plan proposed by the Agency addresses issues regarding intake services and will include the completion of relevant and applicable safety and risk assessments.

- It is recommended that the Agency identify a plan that will ensure that all staff has the knowledge and skills to meet the requirements and expectations set out in the case management and program standards. It is further recommended that the Agency's plan includes mechanisms for ensuring ongoing compliance with case management and program standards.

- The file review findings identified confusion and a lack of understanding among staff regarding expectant parent services and standards. It is recommended that training on the administrative and service requirements regarding expectant parent services be provided to the appropriate staff within the next 3-6 months.

- It is recommended that the Agency implements and coordinates regular and structured meetings with community collaterals for the purpose of building more collaborative relationships, enhancing communication, ensuring more coordination of services and delineating the roles and responsibilities of services.

- The findings from the Review identified issues regarding services to foster parents. The Agency response document dated March 26, 2008 proposed strategies to improve services and relationships with foster families. The Agency identified the need for additional positions and a reorganization of the Resource Unit. A preliminary analysis of the foster care caseload supports the need for additional resources. A new organizational structure proposed by the Agency identifies three additional positions for the Foster Care Unit. One position is based in the Caring 4 U Office in Thompson and one position is identified as a prevention worker position. The proposed structure did not identify how these positions will impact on issues regarding services to foster parents (i.e backlog of the licensing of homes, training and support for foster parents).

- The Review report also identified an issue regarding the Agency's "Foster Care Licensing and Re-Licensing of Agency Foster Home Criminal Records Guidelines" document. Standards outlined with respect to criminal records do not adequately ensure assessment of suitability to provide foster care. The Agency response document did not address this issue.

- The Review findings indicated that the Child Abuse Committee (CAC) was inactive due to issues of recruitment and retention. Efforts were being made by the Child Protection Coordinator to re-establish the CAC and recruit more resources. Further findings revealed that there is a need for training of staff regarding abuse investigations and the role of the CAC. Referrals for the CAC from local communities are sent to their supervisor and then forwarded to the Child Protection Coordinator for presentation to the CAC. Local workers reported that they were not being informed of decisions made by the CAC regarding their cases.

- The Agency response document dated March 26, 2008 indicates that the CAC has been re-established and is meeting consistently on a monthly basis. Efforts continue to recruit a doctor and an elder to participate on the CAC. The Agency's response dated March 26, 2008 proposes that local workers attend the CAC meetings and minutes from the CAC meetings be forwarded to the local workers for their records and follow up. It is further recommended that training is delivered to the local workers regarding child abuse investigations and the role of the CAC, and that one worker from each community attend the annual CAC conference.

- The Child Protection Coordinator attended a child abuse training session with the RCMP beginning on April 21, 2008.

- The Agency has identified a new therapist position for the Child Protection Unit. The Agency's plan does not provide any detail regarding the duties and

responsibilities of the position and how the position will be accessed by the local communities.

### 4.8 Results/Findings Staff Contact/Interviews

A brief examination was done of the Agency staff list. The document confirmed that a total of 36 staff were employed at the main office. The positions were listed as follows:

- administration – 20; and
- direct service workers/management – 16

The questionnaires were subsequently administered to staff employed in the two above categories on October 10, 2007. Questionnaires were also provided to former staff residing in The Pas and area (6); to Board members (7 copies given to the Executive Director as she was to attend a Board meeting); to the staff located in each of the seven satellite offices (23 copies) and to the Winnipeg – based staff (9 copies).

The response rate from the administration staff was 16/20 or 80%; the response rate from the direct services workers 10/16 or 63 %. In the following data collection there are three responses from administrative staff in the regional offices and six responses from direct services workers/supervisors in the regional offices. The total number of completed questionnaires received as of November 5, 2007 was 20 (direct services/supervisors) and 21 (administration).

**Responses of the Direct Services Workers/Management:**

The following is an excerpt of written comments/perceptions of respondents:

- slightly over half of the staff had been employed with the Agency for two years or less;
- one–third of the staff have been employed with the Agency for over five years;
- one-half of the staff confirmed the presence of some form of orientation to the Agency;
- most staff (70%) advised that they had received some training to assist in their job functions;
- most staff (70%) said that they had received adequate support from their supervisors;
- one-third of the staff felt that they could manage their caseload demands effectively;
- over half of the staff commented that they were somewhat satisfied with the support/feedback from their supervisors;
- less than half of the staff reported receiving an evaluation after their probationary period;
- most staff related some level of satisfaction with their job/position within the Agency;

- staff addressed the issue of staff morale by recommending more unit meeting (11), more full staff meetings (11), additional workshops (8), sharing circles (7) and more culturally appropriate ways of intervention;
- most staff responded that the Agency allowed them some degree of flexibility in attending to family matters;
- most staff confirmed some degree of satisfaction with their salary and benefits;
- slightly over one half of the staff indicated that they had not observed or witnessed any forms of discrimination or harassment at their work site; 3 staff commented on age discrimination as an issue; and
- most staff commented on the need for further academic training in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) or Master of Social Work (MSW) program and one reference was made to access to more culturally sensitive programs.

**Written Comments Included in the Questionnaire:**

- the Executive Director is effective but overworked (2);
- there is too much micro-managing being done by senior staff (2);
- clear protocols are required to assist staff in case management – case decisions are often made on the financial status of the Agency rather than in the best interests of the child (2);
- there is a need to reinstitute the family support program to keep children out of care;
- supervisors have too many communities to cover; staff turnover may be related to the lack of supervision;
- decisions are made on a unilateral basis with no input from regional staff (2);
- some senior managers have too much authority and are prone to rescind decisions made by the Executive Director;
- staff are told that there is no money for travel and they are unable to provide services to clients; yet senior staff are always in travel status and attend meetings outside the Province;
- travel claims are not processed in a timely manner;
- guidelines need to be reviewed and revised to assist staff in dealing with the costs of special needs children (2);
- there is a need to update the list of support workers and their skill sets to ensure that they are being properly utilized;
- there are inequities in the salaries of workers (2)
- all jobs should be posted as the initial step in filling vacant positions; and
- concerns about relatives and family members of the Executive Director being hired by the Agency (3).

### 4.9 Responses of Administrative Staff:

- less than one-half (47%) of the staff have been with the Agency for more than three years;
- six staff have been with the Agency for 1-2 years;
- most staff expressed a degree of satisfaction with their orientation schedule;

- three quarters of the staff commented on the fact that they were clear about their job expectations while one-third of the staff advised that they had received access to training and workshops;
- most staff (95%) noted that they were clear about the mission/purpose/goals of the Agency;
- three quarters of the staff expressed some level of satisfaction with the supervision and support being provided to them;
- one-half of the staff felt that their daily job duties were manageable;
- three quarters of the staff received an evaluation after their probationary period;
- slightly over one-half of the staff received an annual evaluation;
- most staff (66%) expressed a degree of satisfaction with their position within the Agency;
- all staff offered some commentary on ways to deal with morale issues. Some of the suggestions included more unit meetings (10), additional workshops (8) and sharing circles among the units (4);
- most staff felt that the Agency was flexible in allowing time to attend to family matters; and
- most staff revealed some degree of satisfaction with their benefits and salary.

**Written Comments Included in the Questionnaire**

- the Executive Director is away from the office too much (3)
- staff felt that friends and family of the Executive Director are treated differently than other staff (2): and
- comments were made on the hard work of the Executive Director (1), the supportive work among administrative staff (1) and the level of satisfaction with the job duties (2).

### 4.10 Results/Findings from Staff/Supervisor Interviews

The following is a summary of information obtained from qualitative interviews from 22 staff and supervisors from the Agency, regional and community offices. Twenty-five staff members were invited to participate in the interviews. One declined and two were unavailable. Interviews were conducted utilizing an instrument designed by the Child Protection Branch. Information is summarized in a non-identifying manner according to themes contained in the interview format.

### A. Philosophy, Goals and Objectives

**Understanding of the Purpose/Function of the Agency:**

The majority of responses indicated that their understanding of the function/purpose of the Agency was to "keep children safe", "ensure safety and protection" "while providing services to First Nation families which would allow for culturally appropriate interventions and resources that enable families to remain intact". Additional responses included "advocacy on behalf of children in care", "provide community-

based services to the communities we serve", and "provide intake services". Some respondents indicated they would like to be able to provide preventative services when working with families, although there are no financial resources to provide supportive and preventative services to families and children. One respondent indicated that the Agency requires more supportive and trained foster homes to meet the Agency's mandate and philosophy.

- **Goals and Objectives of the Agency:** "Keeping children safe and families together", "working with local resources", "giving families tools and resources to assist themselves and keep their children in their own community", provide quality child and family services to Swampy Cree Tribal communities, "support and assist families toward reunification", "compliance with standards", "catch up on Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS)", "manage overall workload", "networking with community resources", "comply with what is required under our mandate", "prevent children from coming into care".

- **Concerns Expressed:** "Lack of resources", and inability to fulfill the goals identified in the Agency's mission statement and philosophy and proposed implementation of Differential Response as a "return to the white man's way'".

- **The Most Important Agency Goal and how it is being met:** "Empowering, reunifying and strengthening families", "ensuring safety of children", and "work with team members and community resources toward strengthening and supporting families and communities".

- **Suggested Changes/Improvements in the Agency Philosophy and Objectives:** The responses varied according to the role performed and the location of service provision. The common themes were recommendations for a more "holistic approach" with an emphasis on "returning more children to their families and communities", "increased preventative resources and services" and "more input from the local/community level", and "interventions should be more family focused".

## B. Organizational Structure and Development

- Agency organizational structure appeared to be understood by the majority of the respondents; and
- Many of the respondents were unclear about the role of the Northern Authority and the Child Protection Branch in relation to their Agency.

**Management**

**Identifying the Structure of the Agency:**

The majority of responses included Board, Executive Director, Managers, department and administrative staff. Other responses included Chief and Council, LCCC and various other committees. Commentary included reference to the Executive Director sitting in on selected committees to advise, make recommendations and/or overrule decisions.

**Interaction with Agency Management:**

The overall theme was that management is supportive of each other and staff are feeling limited support from management. Comments included "good relationship, but I never see them", "I don't, they don't have time", "they have many meetings outside the office", "no support from management", "supervisor overloaded with too many responsibilities and unable to advise and support", "we are directed to talk to our supervisor" indicating that unit staff and community staff are to consult only with their immediate supervisor and not directly with the Executive Director, "monthly management meetings", "place for us to advocate for our staff", "we have a strong management team", "managers provide monthly reports to the Board".

**Agency Functions Well in the Following Areas**

Most respondents indicated that employees of the Agency work very hard to ensure that the Agency objectives and responsibilities are met. The majority of the respondents indicated that staff is generally very supportive of each other and it was noted that "we pull together when someone needs help". Other responses included "the Executive Director treats us uniquely, but not differently from other staff": "at the local level we function very well, don't get caught up in the dynamics at the main office", "in the past there were many conflicts among management staff, we are better now, we are more supportive and constructive".

**C. The Board**

**Understanding of the Role of the Board**

Responses included "support, guidance and decision making for the Agency", "policy makers who pass down policy decisions for the Executive Director to implement," "Executive Director doesn't have the last say as she has to go to the Board who answer to the Executive Council". The majority expressed that they did not know what current priorities the Board faced. They indicated that they had limited

involvement with the Board. Some respondents indicated they assumed that the Board was faced with issues related to the budget, securing resources and hiring qualified staff, however they were unsure as they are not informed about what goes on at the Board level. Other responses included "strategic planning", "addressing issues with Mathias Colomb", "assist with crisis situations", "getting through this review", "child tax benefit issue", "Child Welfare Secretariat", advocate for more resources." The majority of responses indicated they do not know what type of orientation the Board receives.

**Child Abuse Committee (CAC)**

Some respondents indicated they had no information about the CAC or stated that there was no current CAC. Local workers indicated they complete the referrals for the CAC which are sent to their supervisor and then are forwarded to the Child Protection Coordinator for presentation to the CAC. They further indicated that there is currently no mechanism to be informed of CAC decisions. Respondents were unaware of the CAC's role as a system of accountability. There was acknowledgement that the CAC has been inactive for some time due to issues of recruitment and retention of CAC members. Efforts are being made to re-establish the CAC and recruit more Aboriginal and community resources. The Child Protection Coordinator attended the 1st Annual Manitoba Child Abuse Committee Coordinator Conference. There was acknowledgement that more training for staff regarding the function and role of the CAC is needed.

**Agency**

The majority stated that they do have a job description and understood their primary responsibilities. Many of the respondents indicated they were going above and beyond their job responsibilities. They indicated that due to remoteness and lack of other resources in the communities, that this is a common expectation. Some indicated that they are not able to meet their job requirements due to workload and lack of resources. Many of the respondents indicated they did not receive any orientation. Some respondents indicated their orientation consisted of attending the main office and meeting with staff. They were also provided with policy and procedural manuals. Many respondents indicated although they have policy and procedural manuals they do not refer to them while they are conducting their duties. Some of the respondents indicated they find the policy and procedural manuals useful. Some of the respondents who have been employed with the Agency for a long period of time indicated their roles/duties evolved through development of the position. Some respondents who are in new jobs/positions commented they struggled with the role and when they asked management for clarification they were told, "to work from their job description and figure it out". Some staff expressed that

they do not feel they are adequately compensated for their years of service. Concern was expressed about staff who are recently employed and related to the Executive Director are getting paid more than staff who have more time and experience with the Agency.

The majority of the respondents indicated they have copies of the Child and Family Services Act and that they do refer to it often in their work. The majority of the respondents indicated that they do not have copies of the Provincial Program Standards and Case Management Standards and are unsure as to what standards they are required to refer to.

**Some of the Essential Qualities Identified for Staff to Have in Order to Work as a Part of the Agency**

People skills, empathy, respect for clients, respect for community beliefs, respect for others, understanding of community values and norms, professionalism, dedication to the work, follow code of ethics, be supportive of each other. An ability to manage a heavy workload and work under high stress, be able to prove yourself to non-aboriginal agencies and professionals, love of children, positive role model, ability to deal with a lot of paperwork and understanding of policies. To be able to make ethical decisions and choices in your work, have a positive work attitude, be willing to give extra and have a BSW required qualification is to do the work.

**Staff Evaluation/Performance Appraisal**

Most respondents understood they are to have a six month probationary period and annual performance reviews; however, they indicated that these were not taking place on a consistent manner. The time frames range from six months (for new employees) up to three years between evaluations.

**C. Staff Training and Development**

**Agency Sponsored In-Service Training Activities:**

The majority of the respondents identified Core Competency training as the most useful training that has been made available to them. Consensus was that the training opportunities were lacking in terms of cultural relevance to their specific community. Other training provided is Attachment Theory, Management Training, CFSIS & Intake Module, Forensic Interviewing, Critical Stress Debriefing, Cultural Diversity, Child Abuse, Suicide Prevention and Intervention, Legal, Sexual Exploitation, Employment & Labor Workshop, First Aid, Foster Parent Conference, and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention. Many respondents commented on the lack of opportunities to attend training but expressed a willingness to participate in training

events that would enhance their ability to perform their job. Some respondents indicated that the Agency had developed weekend training to accommodate staff's busy schedules. Many of the respondents were agreeable to this arrangement and felt the time off in lieu of time spent at the training was fair. Some respondents described these sessions as not very helpful as it was not training but rather overviews of Agency programs and services. Some respondents indicated case management techniques and case planning is lacking in the overall service delivery of the Agency. Select training opportunities have assisted in job performance. Some respondents expressed the need for further opportunities for Core Training, CFSIS and computer skills training.

**Services Provided:**

**Description**

The services most commonly described are Intake, Resources/Foster Care, Child Protection, Counseling, Workshops, Financial Support, Family Support, Case Management, Youth Camps for High Risk Youth, Community Development, Networking, Advocacy, Referrals, Child Abuse Investigations and Adoption. When asked what services should be provided but are not provided, at present, the responses related to the inability to provide preventative services and supports to families. Other responses suggested more training opportunities and more direct work in communities by management. The majority of the respondents indicated they are unable to do prevention work due to lack of finances and workers.

**Intake**

Most comments were critical of the current intake system citing inefficiency such as delays in getting critical information, CFSIS connectivity and queries about the management of intake services. The delay in getting critical information is very concerning for staff. Some communities compensate for this delay by telephoning each other when there is an intake to ensure prompt follow up is done. Intake is also described as being an administrative/clearing house function and not a delivery of services. Overall, there appears to be considerable gaps in understanding the process of intake within the Agency and how information is relayed to the sub-offices. Respondents indicated they have developed informal systems to accommodate a faulty intake system. This includes phoning receiving agencies to provide information, calling other agencies for consultation and double checking information. Concerns were expressed regarding lack of staff for provincial cases. Respondents also indicated that the Intake Module is not being utilized consistently.

**After Hours Services/Management**

All workers are on call for one week on a rotation schedule. Management provides back-up after hour services. Community-based staff indicated they are expected to be on call more than the regional workers and expressed concerns regarding discrepancy in financial compensation between regional staff and sub-office staff.

**Supervision of Staff**

When asked if there is regular supervision for staff most community workers indicated the opportunities for face-to-face contact was limited. Phone consultation with their supervisor was the usual method. Independence was generally identified as a needed trait in community workers as they reportedly receive little supervision and support. Some respondents expressed high satisfaction with their supervision while others reported that they had very little. Respondents at all levels of the Agency reported community workers are often isolated and required to perform their duties independently. Some respondents indicated a lack of expertise and experience in management as well as a slow turn around time for purchase orders and other financial requests which results in disruption of services for children and to families. Some comments were made about the need for on site supervisors in specific areas, more experienced supervisors in others, and supervisors with a reasonable workload that would allow them to have time for case consultations, etc. Some comments were made regarding the Executive Director's travel and absences from the office.

1. **Issues/Concerns**

**Identified Issues:**

- Heavy workloads.
- Not enough staff.
- High turnover of staff.
- Staff retention – "Currently a blaming culture."
- Lack of effective administrative support.
- Limited resources and supports for community-based workers.
- Unqualified workers practicing social work. We need to hire more qualified workers.
- Less nepotism.
- Resource workers not monitoring foster homes "no contact with foster parents", "Too many Place of Safety homes."
- Perceived unfair practices; unequal treatment of workers (regional office staff "get what they want while other workers ask for supports but don't get

it"). Some workers carry a heavier workload than others, "favoritism", "hiring people she (the Executive Director) knows/are related to her" and after a few months they are promoted to management.

- Staff members are afraid to report concerns about the Executive Director's relatives.
- Expectations are inconsistent – "depends on who you are."
- There is division within the Agency between management and staff.
- Difficult to take time off due to the workload demands.
- "There are days when I don't want to be here, feel compromised ethically."
- There are decisions made at the Executive Director level without consultation, (i.e. decisions about hiring of staff).
- Nepotism - "too many of the Executive Director's family members are employees of the Agency", and "they are not always qualified."
- Lack of funding to provide services to families.
- Perception that management and Board are well compensated and this factor may have an impact on the resources for programs and services. Management/Board seen as spending "too much time and money" on weekend meetings and training out of province.
- Some respondents queried why funding is available for Board travel and workers are unable provide services to families.
- Lack of clerical support. At least three of the respondents indicated that their offices are copying all outgoing correspondence due to the number of documents misplaced or missing when sent to the main office.
- Administrative support expected to address backlog from previous years.
- Community perception – "Other agencies don't take us seriously."
- Slow turn around time for funding requests from the main office resulting in disruption of services (i.e. purchase orders for family visits not processed in time resulting in cancellation of visits); also paperwork submitted by workers within required time frame.
- "How are we going to implement Differential Response at the federal level?"
- "Is something going to come out of this review?"
- There is some degree of conflict between Executive Directors of the Agency and Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services (OCNCFS). This is affecting staff morale and ability for collaboration and coordination of services.

Overall, staff indicated they had a high level of commitment and sincerity in conducting their various duties. The majority of the respondents indicated protection and safety of children is a high priority in their respective practices. The most common concerns identified is lack of qualified and experienced staff,

nepotism, lack of effectiveness in delivery services by the sub-offices due to heavy workloads and lack of support from main office and the backlog of administrative work. The majority of the respondents expressed a strong desire and hope that positive outcomes would emerge from this Review but were skeptical of any meaningful changes occurring within the organization.

**Respondents Understanding of the Reason for the Review**

Responses were divided as they understood the Review coming about as a result of complaints or concerns expressed by former employees (as they were informed of this at an Agency meeting) or that they did not know.

**Other Questions that Might Have been Asked (as Suggested by Respondents)**

In response to this question most respondents asked further questions such as how is the Executive Director's income justified? Is the Executive Director's extensive travel necessary? Why are specific policies in place if they are detrimental to family well being (i.e. sibling groups assigned to several case mangers depending on placement location)? Other stated comments focused on policies or procedures such as the new rates/pay scales implemented for recently hired employees and the sense that some community workers were noncompliant and unmotivated to do their work

When asked about their career goals over the next year and over the following five years the majority of those interviewed stated that they would still be with the Agency or working in some area of child welfare supporting their community in some capacity.

### 4.11 Results/Findings from the Interview with the Executive Director:

**Purpose and Expectations of Review**

The purpose of the Review is to determine the compliance with standards and quality of services provided to families and children. The Review was triggered by complaints from former employees who left the Agency under negative circumstances. It was felt that the Review process was decided without appropriate consultation with the Agency. Other statements and feedback from the Executive Director included "I'm trying to view this as a positive process. I've been getting a lot of support from the other Executive Directors. I'm hoping the Review will show us what we are doing well, how we can strengthen ourselves and identify what resources we need. I know we need to upgrade our files. Staff is starting to recognize the importance of documentation. I'm hoping this Review will provide the Agency with specific recommendations regarding our file management practices."

**Agency's Philosophy, Goals and Objectives**

The Executive Director noted that the purpose of our Agency is to work with First Nations families, provide culturally appropriate services, advocate for families and children, and ensure children are protected. The overall goal is to not have any children in care and to have all children reunited with their families and/or community. There is a need to work more with families, not just with children in care and to have more involvement from community and build more resources together. There is a need to focus on more prevention work and the community leaders need to advocate more for adequate funding for First Nations families on reserve.

**Devolution**

The Executive Director identified the following as some of the biggest challenges since devolution; lack of information on files; lack of relevant data to effectively do age of majority planning; provincial and federal funding discrepancies; devolution happened too fast; foster parents were not prepared for the change and the Agency experienced some resistance from foster parents as there was the feeling that the Agency was going to remove children from their care.

**Organization Structure of the Agency**

The Board is a governance Board. The Board oversees the Agency and ensures that the Agency follow what we are mandated to do and manage our finances appropriately. A key task of the Executive Director is to ensure that the Board is well informed. The reports to the Board are detailed and comprehensive. Current priorities facing the Board is trying to keep up with the changes that are happening ie. Differential Response and the Child Tax Benefit claw back and the impact this will have on our programs. The Agency no longer has trust funds for wards. The Board wants to become more involved in political advocacy for the Agency. The Board has recently revised the Constitution, By-Laws and policies.

The Executive Director is accountable to the Board. The primary responsibilities are to ensure programs/services run properly, try and develop more effective ways to provide service, support my staff, ensure that finances are managed appropriately and work closely with managers and the Board. The Executive Director tries to be visible in the community. There is a current job description and reference was made that it was recently revised to be more reflective of the changes with devolution.

The Agency utilizes the LCCC as an advisory body. The only community that does not have a LCCC is Lynn Lake. Workers meet once a month with the LCCC to discuss new referrals, service needs, and seek feedback and recommendations regarding planning and resources. LCCC members are chosen by leadership in communities. LCCC members are subject to criminal record and child abuse registry checks, and must sign an Oath of Confidentiality. The Agency is planning a LCCC conference: also, LCCC members attend Chief and Council meetings. Unit Coordinators provide monthly reports to Chief and Council.

**Confidentiality**

The Executive Director has emphasized the importance of confidentiality with staff. Staff are reprimanded for breach of confidentiality.

**Child Abuse Committee (CAC)**

The Agency has a regional CAC. The CPC is trying to recruit new members as some members have left the committee meeting. When operational, the CAC meets on a monthly basis.

**Staff Training and Development**

Staff require on-going training to keep up with the changes in child welfare. The Executive Director and managers need training on how to be more effective in their job functions. CFSIS and Intake Module training is needed at the local level. Administrative staff need training on the various administrative functions. Need to be able to cover off for each other. Staff require training on documentation. Our training needs have been identified to the Northern Authority.

Supervision is provided to staff on a monthly basis. Managers also arrange to have regular staff meetings. Performance appraisals are conducted following a six month probationary period and then on an annual basis. The Executive Director completes performance appraisals on all managers and the administrative assistant. Staff provide after hour on call services on a rotation basis in addition to their daily duties. The Executive Director advised that she is supportive of staff. Staff are valued and this message is conveyed to staff on a regular basis. Sessions are set up to elicit feedback from staff.

**Agency Morale**

The Executive Director expressed the view that the Agency functions well though staff are often overwhelmed with the numerous demands of the job. Staff are often required to engage in multi-task activities and this can create additional tension and stress. Other major issues confronting the Executive Director at this time are the review process and how it was handled; the need to keep reassuring the management and staff and responding to the complaints of former employees and how they have affected relationships. The ongoing jurisdictional dispute with OCNCFS also requires some resolution.

**Comments from Former Employees:**

- Six staff had been with the Agency less than two years;
- Six staff advised that they did not receive an adequate training to assist the with their job functions;
- Eight staff were some what clear on their job description;
- Five staff said that they were clear on the mission and goals of the Agency;

- Seven staff noted that they did not receive adequate direction and consultation from their supervisors; one former staff commented that they had three supervisors over a two year period;
- Eleven staff said that they were unable to manage their caseloads in an effective manner;
- Nine staff were dissatisfied with the feedback received from their supervision;
- Ten staff stated that they did not receive an evaluation on their job performance;
- Eleven staff indicated a dissatisfaction with their position within the Agency:
- Seven staff confirmed the need to have more workshops (conflict management) to assist in their job performance;
- Eleven staff commented on the lack of respect between main office and the Winnipeg office;
- Seven staff indicated some satisfaction with the Agency in providing for some flexibility with family matters;
- Eight staff commented on the fact that they had observed some hostility between management and staff as well as toward other agencies;
- Four staff commented on incidents of racial discrimination in the workplace;
- Seven staff left the Agency for another job offer, 1 staff left due to a low salary, one staff had a contract which expired and 2 staff gave no reason for their decision to leave the Agency.

**Written Comments Included in the Questionnaire:**

- Supervision provided to the staff is inconsistent;
- Training initiatives are not linked to staff evaluations as internal politics appear to guide pay scales;
- The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry - Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI) was designed to fail as money appears to be allocated to provincial children in care and will have limited impact in First Nations communities;
- There is a lack of respect shown to staff working outside of the main office;
- There is some micro-managing of cases and at times the decision-making process is flawed.

### 4.12 Summary of Key Findings

- Most staff are clear on the mission/goals of the Agency and support the mandate of the Agency;
- Most staff in direct services and administration confirmed a degree of satisfaction with the training/orientation provided to them;
- Most staff expressed a positive view of the supervision provided to them with their work activities;
- Some staff felt that the organizational structure needs to be reviewed and changed as it does appear that this structure no longer serves the best interests of the Agency and staff;
- The Winnipeg-based office and the satellite offices have unique workload needs and these needs have to be addressed by management;

- Some staff commented on the complex and difficult cases being assigned to them and their need for ongoing regular supervision.
- Some staff noted that the frequent absences of the Executive Director has created a vacuum and staff are not clear as to whom is in charge; also, case decisions appear to change at the management level;
- Some staff felt that the financial status of the Agency often determines whether a case plan is accepted; the financial situation also restricted the ability of staff to maintain regular and required contact with children in care;
- A majority of staff involved in direct services indicated their inability to manage their respective caseloads and were concerned that children may be left at risk;
- Most staff offered opinions as to the ways to improve staff morale and suggested more full staff meetings, an increase in the number unit meetings, sharing circles and continued access to training sessions;
- Some staff commented that Agency funds were used for excessive travel by senior management and were not being directed at children and families;
- Some staff commented on the hiring practices of the Agency and their perception that a degree of nepotism occurs when positions are being filled (permanent and term positions);
- There is a significant turnover rate for employees working in the direct services and management levels of the Agency: there are no emerging themes which account for this low retention rate as staff gave a variety of reasons for their decision to leave the Agency; and
- The responses from the Board members confirmed their level of satisfaction with the present management of the Agency.

### 4.13 Themes from Former Staff

- Agency staff should follow current policies in place, By-Laws need to be clear and to address conflict of interest;
- The current Executive Director needs to trust her current employees in the decision making process regarding case management;
- The current Executive Director requires extensive training for her position to effectively manage and administer the Agency;
- The meetings between the Agency Executive Director and Board of Directors must be minimized to at least 12 meetings a year and within the Province of Manitoba;
- Reduce travel costs for Executive Director and Board of Directors;
- Management staff collectively support each other;
- The Winnipeg office requires more staff resources;
- The Winnipeg office requires more support from Agency;
- The local offices require more community resources and staff resources;
- Agency needs to address the issue of nepotism within the Agency;
- Agency staff at the main office to support other staff at all local offices and Winnipeg sub-office;
- Staff to receive more training to do their jobs effectively;
- Staff at the local offices to conduct workshops for community members;
- Allow workers to travel to home visits;

- Reduce nepotism within the Agency;
- Agency to provide supports to foster parents;
- Reduce duplication of files, waste of paper;
- Utilize support staff at each sub-office;
- Reduce political interference;
- Agency to complete criminal record checks and child abuse registry checks on all employees;
- Have more team building with all Agency staff;
- Show more respect, caring, loyalty and honor of workers;
- Winnipeg office needs a budget for a finance position;
- Staff to do more prevention work and workshops in the communities;
- Workers in the communities to build partnerships with other community resources; and
- Improve the role to better the Agency, having meetings with other resources to empower the Agency, workers, communities and families.

### 4.14 Results/Findings from Collateral Consultations

Collateral consultations were conducted with agencies providing service for and to the Agency. The interviews were conducted using an interview format that had five areas to measure; these areas included relationship with the Agency, services provided by the Agency, Agency strengths and areas for improvement, feedback as to the general community child welfare needs, and general comments surrounding the Agency.

**Collateral Agencies Reported the Following:**

**1. Relationship with Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency:**

- At least one of the collateral agencies indicated a breakdown in communication between the agencies. There was no reporting of child and family services concerns to the DIA.
- Most concerning are the reports that collaterals had perceived that they are physically intimidated by staff, and that they fear that reprisals may be made for speaking out.
- At least one of the collateral agencies indicated a general satisfaction with the Agency's performance in providing child abuse services.

**2. Services provided by Agency:**

- Two of the collateral agencies indicated that they had a 'limited' understanding of the processes and services provided by the Agency.
- The collaterals interviewed had expressed some confusion as to the Designated Intake status of the Agency. One respondent accepted the responsibility for this confusion as they felt that they could have read the material on this matter. At least one of the respondents indicated that intakes were being referred to another child welfare agency.

**3. Agency strengths and areas for improvement:**

- Collaterals had indicated that there could be more collaborative planning occurring between agencies. They indicated that this appeared to be lacking in case planning and management.
- Collaterals had also indicated that information surrounding background and status of cases was lacking. This made their positions as collateral workers very difficult as they were often missing vital information. Examples of this missing information include a child's legal status with an agency, and a child's health concerns, ie. suicidal ideation.
- This inability to contact workers made some of the duties of the collateral agencies difficult as signatures were needed or information on children being serviced.
- There was an expressed concern surrounding the collateral agencies' inability to contact workers, or by the lack of returned calls by workers. This inability to contact workers made some of the duties of the collateral agencies difficult as signatures were needed and/or information required to effectively provide services to children and families was not provided; and
- At least one collateral had indicated that they felt that staff had a 'lack of professionalism' in their contact with agencies and families.

**Feedback on community child welfare needs:**

At least one of the collaterals indicated that there is a need for more child abuse workers in the community and better communication among the agencies working in the catchment area

**Comments:**

- Collaterals had cited a desire for a more positive professional relationship with the Agency. This was considered to be in the best interests of the children.

### 4.15 Summary of Findings of Service Delivery/Program Review:

The findings confirm that there is a perception that there is a degree of nepotism that is affecting staff morale and service delivery. There is also evidence that the existing organizational and management structure does not effectively support staff and service provision at the community level. Relationships with foster parents and collaterals are strained. There is some confusion regarding the Agency's role and jurisdiction since the AJI-CWI restructuring. The Agency has experienced high turnover, resulting in workload backlog and disruption in services. There is a significant backlog of filing. Existing filing systems require updating, as well as re-organization in accordance with provincial standards.

There is minimal compliance with program and case management standards. On the majority of the files reviewed, documentation was limited. The majority of the files reviewed did not have updated contact recordings. Safety and risk assessments

were not evident in the majority of the files reviewed. Comprehensive family assessments or child assessments were not evident in the majority of the files reviewed. Detailed case plans were not evident in the majority of the files reviewed. Case management decisions and service delivery practices are often based on financial policies and practices rather than best practice.

There is a significant backlog of intakes on the Intake Module that require conclusion, further follow up or referral to ongoing services. The Agency is the DIA for The Pas and Swampy Cree Tribal communities; however, OCNCFS is delivering intake services for Opaskwayak Cree Nation members. This is in contravention of the Joint Intake and Emergency Services by Designated Agencies Regulation. A more comprehensive review of the intake services and response plan is required to address the issues with respect to the DIA.

The initial step in resolving some of these issues occurred on January 14, 2008 when a meeting was held with the Intake Coordinator and a staff member of the Northern Authority. The purpose of the meeting was to develop an action plan and to ensure that additional resources (human and financial) are in place to assist staff in dealing with the direct service and administrative demands.

The relationship between the Executive Director of the Agency and the Executive Director of OCNCFS is conflicted, and as a result there appears to be minimal collaboration or coordination of services among these agencies.

## 5. FINDINGS FROM THE FINANCIAL REVIEW

### 5.1 Financial Status

The financial status of the Agency is identified in the tables below. These tables were prepared with data from the Agency's 2006/07 audited financial statements.

| INDICATORS | FY 2006-2007 | FY 2005-2006 |
|---|---|---|
| Current Assets | $4,642,732 | $4,133,913 |
| Current Liabilities | $3,252,976 | $2,369,590 |
| Working Capital Surplus (Deficit) = (Current Assets minus Current Liabilities) | $1,389,756 | $1,764,323 |
| Current Year Surplus (Deficit) | ($374,567) | $106,189 |
| Cumulative Surplus (Deficit) | $1,389,756 | $1,764,323 |
| Total Operating Revenue (Total Revenue less Major Capital) | $14,833,347 | $12,207,648 |
| Working Capital Surplus (Deficit) / Total Operating Revenue (%) | 9.37% | 14.45% |
| Current Year Surplus (Deficit)/Total Operating Revenue (%) | -2.53% | 0.87% |
| Cumulative Surplus (Deficit)/Total Operating Revenue (%) | 9.37% | 14.45% |

**Revenue and Expenditure Detail**

| MAINTENANCE | Province/ Authority | % | INAC | % | Other | % | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Revenues | $5,838,082 | 65.4% | $2,447,975 | 27.4% | $647,043 | 7.2% | $8,933,100 |
| Expenditures | 6,450,962 | 70.6% | 2,409,835 | 26.4% | 278,785 | 3.0% | 9,139,582 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) | $(612,880) | | $38,140 | | $368,258 | | $(206,482) |

*NOTE: Other Revenue represents the Children's Special Allowance revenues the Agency receives for Federal wards.*

| OPERATIONS | Province/ Authority | % | INAC | % | Other | % | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Revenues | $2,412,899 | 40.9% | $3,192,704 | 54.1% | $294,644 | 5.0% | $5,900,247 |
| Expenditures | 1,680,137 | 27.7% | 4,388,195 | 72.3% | | | 6,068,332 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) | $732,762 | | (1,195,491) | | $294,644 | | $(168,085) |

Note: Based on the caseload numbers identified and the level of provincial maintenance expenditures shown in the table above, it is apparent that the Agency's allocation method used for operating expenditures needs to be adjusted to reflect the increase to their provincial caseload.

| TOTALS | Province/ Authority | % | INAC | % | Other | % | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Revenues | $8,250,981 | 55.6% | $5,640,679 | 38.0% | $941,687 | 6.4% | $14,833,100 |
| Expenditures | 8,131,099 | 53.5% | 6,798,030 | 44.7% | 278,785 | 1.8% | 15,207,914 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) | $119,882 | | (1,157,351) | | $662,902 | | $ (374,567) |

The audited financial statements indicate that as at March 31, 2007, the Agency's overall financial status is stable. It is also recognized that as a result of the AJI-CWI the Agency's operations have increased significantly over last two fiscal periods. For example, total revenues reported for 2004/05 were $9,791,890 and expenditures

were $9,880,004, that's a 51.5% and 53.9% increase respectively. This reflects the increased provincial children in care for the Agency.

## 5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The scope of the financial review that was done was to examine children in care files to confirm adherence to established provincial standards as they relate to eligible child maintenance expenditures. Administrative policies and practices were also reviewed, with a specific focus on items that were part of the allegations against the Agency.

### Review of Child Maintenance Expenditures

The sample size for the maintenance review was selected based on 30% of the Agency's total children in care files, which at the time was determined to be approximately 450 files. This provided a sample of approximately 135 files, 50% of which were selected from the March/07 monthly maintenance billings submitted to INAC and 50% from the July/07 billings. The following is our key findings:

- The review of the child maintenance expenditures relating to the sample taken from the March/07 and July/07 maintenance reports submitted to INAC went very well. In most part, the required supporting documentation was available on-site. There were only a handful of files sampled that the Agency required additional time to locate and/or produce the necessary supporting documents. The Agency was notified of the missing documentation and had been given 60 calendar days from November 5, 2007 to provide this documentation. The Agency complied with this request.

- While on-site it was identified that many of the files reviewed did not contain the required documentation to support the claimed expenditures. However, in most instances this missing information was located within the office. It was apparent that the filing was not up to date and disorganized. Other than these housekeeping issues it was verified that the Agency is adhering to established provincial standards as they relate to eligible child maintenance expenditures.

- During the review it was noted that the Agency provides the emergency rate for the initial 4 days when relocating a child in all circumstances including a change in foster parents where the child has been in continuous care.

## 5.3 Administrative Review

This portion of the Review included a review of the Agency's By-Laws, Board meeting minutes, operating policies and procedures. Afterwards, an interview was completed with the Agency's Executive Director and Senior Accountant. The following are our key findings:

- The Agency's financial and personnel policies were revised and updated in 2006, the Agency's By-Laws in May 2007. The Agency's operating policies are in

a central location and accessible by all staff. It was confirmed that the Agency holds $5 million in liability insurance. Board of Director meeting minutes were current and kept together in one place.

- Current honoraria and travel per diems for travel within and out of province for Board members were not identified in any of the Agency's operating policies or the Agency By-Laws. Board expenditures totalled $216,644 in 2006/07, as reported in the audited financial statements. While travel per diems were identified in the Agency's operating policies for staff, they too are well above government rates, specifically for out of province travel. The following tables disclose the travel per diems employed by the Agency.

**Board of Directors**

| ITEMS | IN PROVINCE | OUT OF PROVINCE |
|---|---|---|
| *Honoraria (per day) | $150.00 | $150.00 |
| *Travel Time | 200.00 | 200.00 |
| Meal Allowance (per day) | 45.00 | 200.00 |
| Incidentals (per day) | 20.00 | 20.00 |
| Accommodations (per day) | 85.00 | Paid by Agency |
| Mileage (per kilometre) | .55 cents | .55 cents |

Note 4 of the Agency's current Constitution states that "The directors shall serve without remuneration...but may be paid expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties."

**Executive Director and Director of Finance**

| ITEMS | IN PROVINCE | OUT OF PROVINCE |
|---|---|---|
| Travel Time | N/A | N/A |
| Meal Allowance (per day) | 300.00 | 200.00 |
| Incidentals (per day) | 30.00 | 30.00 |
| Accommodations (per day) | Included in meal allow. | Paid by Agency |
| Mileage (per kilometre) | .55 cents | .55 cents |

**Agency Staff**

| ITEMS | IN PROVINCE | OUT OF PROVINCE |
|---|---|---|
| Travel Time | N/A | N/A |
| Meal Allowance (per day) | $45.00 | 200.00 |
| Incidentals (per day) | 20.00 | 20.00 |
| Accommodations (per day) | Paid by Agency | Paid by Agency |
| Mileage (per kilometre) | .55 cents | .55 cents |

It was noted that whenever possible staff are strongly encouraged to travel together in order to reduce costs. It was also identified in the Agency personnel policy that accommodation costs are not to exceed $100/night and that exceptions require Executive Director approval.
The following are the provincial and federal travel per diems at the time of the Review:

| ITEMS | PROVINCE | FEDERAL |
|---|---|---|
| Travel Time | N/A | N/A |
| Meal Allowance (per day) | $33.60 (north rate) | $62.00 |
| Incidentals (per day) | 4.60 | 17.30 |
| Accommodations (per day) | Paid by Department | Paid by Department |
| Private Accommodations (per day) | $52.00 | $50.00 |
| Mileage (per kilometre) | .43.8 cents (north) | .46.5 cents (Oct 1/07) |

*These government per diems apply to both in and out of province travel.*

The Agency operates as a non-profit type of organization with public funds being its main source of revenues. It appears the Agency's travel per diems, specifically out of province are significantly above governmental rates.

- It was identified that the Agency is paying $2,000.00/month (increased from $1,600, as per board meeting minutes of May 9/06) to Swampy Cree Tribal Council (SCTC) for Board recoveries. In addition, the Agency makes a contribution of $30,000 to SCTC for their Annual General Meeting. There is no service agreement in place with the Tribal Council for the purchase of services. The Executive Director advised that there is no current involvement by SCTC in the governance or operation of the Agency.

- There is no provision in the Agency's personnel policy identifying the process for dealing with the employment of relations to senior Agency officials, specifically those situations involving contracted services.

- When reviewing the Board meeting minutes it was identified that the Board approved a $30,000.00 purchase of a van for the Executive Director in lieu of salary increases for the next three years. The cost of the van almost exceeds the incremental increases present in the current salary scale for the Executive Director position; which is $68,487 for Year 1, Level 1, and is $99,527.50 for Year 8, Level 5, thus resulting in a salary range of $31,040.50.

- It was identified that the Agency has recently revised and updated its compensation scales, which most employees fall under. However, at the time of the Review we were advised that there were still some employees on the old salary scales.

- The community of Marcel Colomb is not identified as a member community under the Agency's By-Laws.

- The Agency's personnel policy identifies that employee loans/advances, to a maximum of $500, are available to permanent employees. Repayment of any loan is to be within five pay periods and a15 % administration fee will be applied.

- The Agency provided monthly credit card statements for the period April 2006 to March 2007 for the Executive Director, and the former Winnipeg Unit Coordinator. Upon review of the monthly statements, it was evident that credit card used by the Winnipeg Unit Coordinator had minimal transactions on it.

However, the monthly statements for the Executive Director's credit card showed that it was used extensively for cash advances (for both personal and business-related purposes), various travel-related expenses (such as meals, flights, hotels and gas), shopping, vehicle maintenance, grocery expenses, and $17,128.50 for Doubletree Fallsview at Niagara Falls, Ontario (this was for hotel and activity expenses and was confirmed in the accounting for the Niagara Falls Staff Retreat). As it was evident that the Executive Director's credit card was used for personal expenses, the review team did not find it necessary to request the cash advance receipts for further review. Although payments for the Executive Director's credit card were made from the Scotiabank, Opaskwayak MB, the Finance Director confirmed that payroll deductions are made from the Executive Director's salary for the personal usage of the Agency credit card.

- The Niagara Falls Staff Retreat was scheduled from September 10 -16, 2006, which included two full travel days by chartered bus each way for most of the staff. The Board and some other staff travelled in another manner that was not noted in the information provided. According to the accounting provided, the Agency budgeted $70,000 from their operations for this trip, staff raised $11,940 through payroll deductions to cover meals and miscellaneous items, and $660 was raised through staff fundraising efforts. Expenses for the retreat included $19,750 for a bus rental, $1,985.57 for hotel accommodations in Thunder Bay, $12,528.50 for hotel accommodations in Niagara Falls, $7,555.46 for activities (ie. golf, spa, adventure passes, marine land, theatre and fireworks), $4,957.34 for dinner and cruise, $15,366.12 for board travel, and $10,198.16 for other travel, for total expenses of $72,341.15.

## 5.4 Recommended Actions

### 1. Use of Agency Credit Cards

It is recommended that the Agency strictly enforce its policy regarding the use of Agency credit cards. The credit card is to be only used for the purchase of authorized business, travel and hospitality related expenses. The card is not for personal use. Any misuses of the credit card will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of the cardholder. It is recommended that the Agency amend its policy to include a credit card user agreement (see sample agreement in Appendix C).

### 2. Purchase of Goods for Personal Use

It is recommended that the Agency's Finance Policy Manual include a statement to the effect that the Board will have no authority to authorize the use of Agency funds for the purchase of private vehicles for any staff member and/or Board member.

### 3. Issue – Travel Expenses For Employees

It is recommended that staff and management receive the same compensation for expenses related to travel, meals, accommodations and mileage. Honorariums do not apply to management and staff as they are already paid for their work.

Some guidelines for travel expenses include:

- Province of Manitoba for travel within the Province: Meals - North is $33.60 per day and South is $31.40 per day; Incidentals are $4.60 per day.
- Private arrangements: Accommodations are $52.00 per day; Meals - North is $26.88 per day and South is $25.12 per day; Incidentals are $3.20 per day.
- Government of Canada: meals are $62.75 per day; incidentals are $17.30 per day; accommodations are based reasonable and/or pre-approved hotel rates; Private accommodations are $50.00 per day.

### 4. Issue – Child Maintenance

It is recommended that a process be established within the Agency to continue to track the documentation related to child maintenance expenditures. The review of the child maintenance expenditures related to the sample from the March 2007 and July 2007 maintenance reports submitted to INAC went very well. In the most part, the required supporting documentation was available on site. There were only a handful of files sampled that the Agency required additional time to locate and/or produce the necessary supporting documents. The Agency had been notified of the missing documentation and was given a time line of 60 calendar days from November 5, 2007 to provide this documentation. This task has been completed.

### 5. Issue - Staff Travel/Retreats Outside the Province of Manitoba

It is recommended that the Agency exercises caution in the practice of holding staff retreats and annual meetings outside the Province. Given the intense scrutiny of this practice and the public finances involved there should be a cost sharing formula in place to fund such an event. It should also be noted that the Agency can take a lead role in supporting local First Nation's business enterprises.

### 6. Salaries of Staff and Management

It is recognized that the Agency developed a new salary scale for all employees. The Agency must support the principle of equal salary for all employees based on equal qualifications and equal work responsibilities.

### 7. Issue - Employee Loans/Advances

It is recommended that the Agency refrain from using federal funds for employee loans/advances as this practice is in direct contravention of the comprehensive funding arrangement with INAC, as per clause 2.5.1 of PART C – ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK which states "The Agency shall not make loans from funds transferred under this Arrangement."

## 6. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND AGENCY RESPONSES (JUNE 6, 2008)

### 1. Governance

### 1.1 Board Membership

**Recommendation** – There is a need to implement a plan to re-structure the Board. There is a need to reconsider the process in which members are appointed to the Board and ensure that there is a succession plan in place to bring on new members to the Board from the six communities.

**Agency Response**

The Chief and Council, at the community level, have the authority to appoint an individual to the Board.

The Board of Directors will meet with Chief and Council to outline the details of the roles and responsibilities of a Board member, the length of term, the qualifications required, as well as ensuring that the incumbent passes the CFSIS check, Child Abuse Registry check and criminal record check.

A meeting will be required with the Swampy Cree Tribal Council Chiefs and Councils to further discuss the continuity of board membership.

### 1.2. Expansion of Board Membership

**Recommendation** – There is a need to expand the Board membership to include full participation from the Marcel Colomb First Nation.

**Agency Response**

The Agency does have a representative on the Board from Marcel Colomb First Nation who is now a full member with full voting rights – effective April 2008.

### 1.3. Frequency/Location of Board Meetings

**Recommendation**– Board meetings should be held on a scheduled basis. It is further suggested that the Board meet on a monthly basis and that these sessions be held within the Province of Manitoba.

**Agency Response**

Based on the planning sessions that have taken place over the past few months, the Board of Directors has agreed to limit their Board meetings to a monthly basis, with the exception of July and August. All meetings will be taking place in either the community of Opaskwayak Cree Nation, or one of the member communities.

Special Board meetings can only be called at the discretion of the Executive Director and in consultation with the Board Chair. Should special Board meetings be required it was discussed that only the Executive Board would meet, and then ratify any decisions at the next regular board meeting.

A two to three day yearly orientation session will include updating the Board on any changes that may have taken place regarding policies, changes to the child welfare system, and review the Strategic Plan (as to what has been completed and what needs to be changed.) Location to be determined within Manitoba by the Board.

### 1.4. Board Per Diems and Honoraria

**Recommendation** – It is recommended that the Agency's Constitution be amended to recognize that an honorarium is paid to the "Directors" of the Board for their time. It is further recommended that the present per diem allocation for Board members be changed. The proposed payment schedule will include an honorarium, not to exceed $200.00 per day; travel allowance inclusive of meals, incidentals and accommodations, which are to be set at the same rates established for Agency employees and .55 cents per kilometer for mileage.

**Agency Response**

The Board of Directors has discussed this area and has decided for it to remain at the present per diem rate based on the high cost of travel rates. Gas has steadily been increasing, hotel rates have increased. Research will also be implemented with other agencies as to their rates. The Agency will try to follow those rates as set by other Agencies.

At discussions with the Northern Authority, the Board has requested that a meeting be set up with all the northern agency Boards to standardize all board by laws and agency policies. It is imperative that all organizations work collectively rather than independently. Topics of discussion would include the option of standardizing election times, and yearly training sessions for all Board members. This would not only make the agencies stronger, but have everyone working together following the same guidelines.

Once this has been completed, then the per diems and honoraria rates may be changed.

### 1.5. Potential Board Interference in Case Decisions

**Recommendation** – To avoid any perceived conflicts of interest by staff, local committees, Chiefs and Councils and the Board of the Agency, a new statement is required to confirm this objective.

**Agency Response**

The Agency takes a very strong stance regarding the interference in Case Management. The Board has continuously stated in meetings that they do not partake in any day to day activities of the Agency - that is strictly left to the Executive Director. Should a Board member receive a call or visit from any community members regarding any cases, they automatically contact the Executive Director and relay the information on. A conflict of interest policy is included in the Agency's personnel policy manual, as well as the Board of Director's By-Laws. Board members are bound by the conflict of interest policy, and will remove themselves should a conflict occur.

### 1.6. Hiring of Staff

**Recommendation** – There is a statement required indicating that the Agency will accept the Provincial Workforce Qualifications Standard for the hiring of new staff. The hiring policy of the Agency should specifically state that any contract position of less than three months can be filled via a direct appointment; any contract position in excess of three months must be advertised and a board convened to complete the hiring process. Any staff member related to the applicant must exclude themselves from the hiring session.

**Agency Response**

Currently, the Agency is advertising for the position of Human Resources Coordinator. This individual will work alongside Management and the Executive Director to ensure that the issues brought out from the file review will be implemented and kept up to date. The Agency has just placed an advertisement for this position – so by the time the advertisement runs, and interviews are completed, this person should be starting the first week of July. Some of the items requiring immediate attention and follow up will be updating the job descriptions and ensuring confirmation of the work force qualification standards for the hiring of new staff; updating policies to reflect the recommended changes by the Review – specifically the hiring process, and travel. Expected date of completion for these specific items would be in September 2008.

## 2. Service Delivery

### 2.1. Current Backlog of Intake Cases

**Recommendation** – A work plan needs to be established that will address the backlog on intake cases; the work plan should comment on the present intake cases that require further assessment services from the DIA, cases that require transfer to ongoing services and cases that can be closed/concluded. The work plan needs to include a statement on the resources required to complete the work on the backlog and a projected time frame for completion. There should also be a plan to include strategies to ensure ongoing management of intakes to guard against a further backlog of cases.

**Agency Response**

In conjunction with the Northern Authority, the Agency will address the current backlog of cases. The current supervisor will print out a log of all outstanding cases that need to be closed off. With the additional resources provided by the Northern Authority, the supervisor and staff will identify those cases that need closing or need to be transferred to a case worker. The case worker will follow up with those cases and report back to the supervisor, at which time they may be closed off. It is estimated that it will take approximately one to three months to complete this project, depending on the number of files that require follow up. Below are the case statistics as of June 9, 2008.

| *DEPT* | *NEW* | *OPENED* | *READY FOR CLOSURE* | *TOTAL* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CPU | 0 | 47 | 39 | 86 |
| DIA | 5 | 169 | 285 | 459 |
| **TOTALS** | **5** | **216** | **324** | **545** |

### 2.2. File Documentation and File Management

**Recommendation** – It is recommended that training on file documentation should be delivered to all Agency staff within the next 3-6 months. The training should include documentation requirements regarding intake, safety and risk assessment, contact recordings, assessment, case planning, case transfers and case closing. It is further recommended that the Agency identify a plan that will address the ongoing monitoring and review of the documentation to ensure compliance with service standards.

**Agency Response**

Date set for June 19 - 21, 2008 in Winnipeg for senior/local/provincial workers.

Training will be provided to them, covering all areas. Quarterly progress reports for all open cases will be used as a tool to address the ongoing monitoring and review of the documentation to ensure compliance with standards.

The Agency hired a Training Technician for a period of one year to provide on-site training in CFSIS/Intake Module to the Local Communities/Sub-Offices. This individual is in the process of developing in-house training manuals for Family and Child Tracking System and CFSIS/Intake. The technician is also available via telephone for consultation and assistance to the staff, similar to the help desk. A calendar of travel dates to the various communities will be available at the end of June.

A new filing system has been set up in the finance area where both provincial and federal children in care all have financial files.

### 2.3 Safety and Risk Assessment

**Recommendation** - It is recommended that a work plan proposed by the Agency to address issues regarding intake services will include the completion of safety and risk assessments.

**Agency Response**

Training will be provided to the provincial and federal workers and DIA supervisor on how to conduct safety and risk assessment. The Agency will ensure the intake workers all following through with the provincial standards for Intake assessment. Currently the safety assessment is being utilized by intake workers and Local CFS workers on an on going basis. Training is being provided to the local workers June 20-23, 2008 where the safety assessments and risk assessments will be presented. Dr. Charles Ferguson (Child Protection Center) has been secured to participate in the training on how to conduct safety and risk assessments on child abuse cases. As well, a staff person from the Northern Authority has agreed to come in and do a training session regarding forms, etc.

A working weekend will be implemented for the DIA function in the upcoming months. Focus will be on the intake department procedures; proper note taking; proper safety assessments; how to effectively diffuse escalating circumstances with irate clientele; and a refresher on Authority Determination Forms, particularly with new staff.

The DIA coordinator will seek core training for Intake workers specifically for safety and risk assessments.

### 2.4. Issue – Compliance with Case Management and Program Standards

**Recommendation** – It is recommended that the Agency identify a plan that will ensure that all staff has the knowledge and skills to meet the requirements and expectations set out in the case management and program standards. It is further recommended that the Agency's plan include some mechanisms for ensuring ongoing compliance with case management and program standards. Compliance issues are connected to the caseload/workload/worker ratio and this matter must be addressed.

**Agency Response**

To address the compliance issue the Agency has scheduled training for the senior and local workers on June 20-23, 2008 when an Agency Relations (Province) staff person will be attending our senior/local/provincial working weekend to go over our forms and provincial standards.

The Agency submitted a proposal to the Northern Authority requesting additional resources. Part of the proposal requested funding for the Family Enhancement Workers as part of the move toward the Differential Response Model. The Agency has already implemented a Family Enhancement Worker for the Winnipeg Office. Although there has been no funding identified to implement the Differential Response Initiative on reserves due

to the prevention model with INAC still being worked on, the Agency has decided to move forward and provide each of the reserves with a Family Enhancement Worker. The positions will be for a term of 2 years. The funding for these positions will come from the deferred monies from prior years. Currently provincial and federal managers monitor and ensure Case Management and Program Standards are being practiced by provincial and local child and family services workers.

In compliance with case management and requirements of face to face contact with foster families and wards, the following visits have taken place, as submitted by the child and family services Unit Coordinators:

| | *JAN 2008* | *FEB 2008* | *MAR 2008* | *APR 2008* | *TOTALS* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Winnipeg | 22 | 25 | 47 | 45 | 139 |
| Mosakahiken | 4 | 16 | 11 | 3 | 34 |
| Chemawawin | 10 | 11 | 7 | 9 | 37 |
| Misipawistic | 19 | 17 | 10 | 10 | 56 |
| Sapotaweyak | 16 | 10 | 11 | 15 | 52 |
| Wuskwi Sipihk | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 14 |
| Swan River | 16 | n/a | n/a | 9 | 25 |
| Provincial | 55 | 55 | 58 | 53 | 221 |
| **TOTALS:** | **146** | **136** | **149** | **147** | **578** |

Mathias Colomb Cree Nation statistical information not available at this time.

### 2.5. Expectant Parent Services

**Recommendation** –It is recommended that training on the administrative and service requirements regarding expectant parent services be provided to the appropriate staff within the next 3-6 months.

### Agency Response

This is an agenda item for our senior/local/provincial working weekend and will remind staff of this process. The Agency Relations staff person (Province) in conjunction with Agency staff can provide details on compliance and standards regarding Expectant Parent Services files and the Agency will ensure that this is followed on an ongoing basis.

### 2.6. Collateral Relationships

**Recommendation** – It is recommended that the Agency implement and coordinate regular and structured meetings with community collaterals for the purpose of building more collaborative relationships, enhancing communication, ensuring more coordination of services and delineating the roles and responsibilities of services.

**Agency Response**

At the local levels, the Agency works closely with the various collaterals within the communities such as RCMP, the schools, nursing stations, health departments, and the LCCC's.

From the main office, the Agency does attend networking meetings with collaterals such as local workers, LCCC's, Northern Directors meetings, Steering Committee meetings with other DIA's, Schools, Caring 4 You Program meetings in Thompson, General Authority, Metis Authority, and Southern Authority, Nursing Stations, RCMP and Judicial Collaterals.

Currently the Agency has formed a Crisis Team with other professionals from Pukatawagan and the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Center.

At this point CNCFCA maintains a working relationship with OCNCFS is there. This is one area that the Agency needs to focus on for the next year to make this a positive relationship. The Agency does have a close working relationship with the Joe A Ross School, RCMP, K- Center – all situated within Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

### 2.7. Foster Care Services

**Recommendation** -It is recommended that the Agency conduct a preliminary analysis of the foster care caseload and determine the resources to address the backlog of licensing and re-licensing requests.

**Agency Response**

The Agency has reviewed the foster case load and has determined the resources available to address the backlog of licensing and re-licensing requests. In January 2008, a proposal was submitted to the Northern Authority requesting additional resources to complete this backlog of licensing and re-licensing. The proposal indicates the plan of action along with time frames. The present stats of the Agency consist of the following:

| AREA | LICENSED HOMES | UNLICENSED HOME | POS'S |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Pas | 8 | 9 | 19 |
| Grand Rapids | 12 | 8 | 5 |
| Chemawawin | 2 | 20 | 1 |
| Wuskwi Sipihk | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Sapotaweyak | 0 | 8 | 1 |
| Mosakahiken | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| MCCN | 6 | 25 | 5 |
| Southern/Northern | 16 | 79 | 28 |
| **Total** | **49** | **155** | **61** |

funds for the purchase of private vehicles for any staff member and/or Board member.

**Agency Response**

The Board of Directors will put in place within their By-Laws that there will be no further purchases of goods for personnel use. This practice will cease.

### 3.3. Travel Expenses for Employees

**Recommendation** - It is recommended that staff and management receive the same compensation for expenses related to travel, meals, accommodations and mileage. Honorariums do not apply to management and staff as they are already paid for their work.

**Agency Response**

The current rates for employees are slightly higher than those rates set by the province and federal. This is due to the rising costs of gas, and accommodations. As per the Board per diems and honoraria, the Board of Directors has advised that the present rates will remain status quo until a meeting is set up with the other agencies and Board of Directors to set standard rates right across the board. The Executive Management receives a higher rate than the staff, as the Executive Management's accommodations are not covered through Agency Purchase Orders. It should also be noted that the management and staff do not receive an honorarium within their travel rates.

### 3.4. Child Maintenance

**Recommendation** - It is recommended that a process be established within the Agency to continue to track the documentation related to child maintenance expenditures.

**Agency Response**

The Agency is in agreement that a process must be established to track the documentation related to child maintenance expenditures. During the past three months, a contracted Xerox Clerk has been hired to assist the Filing Clerk with the children-in-care files. During the past four months, a Supplies/Xerox Clerk has also been hired to assist in the photocopying of the financial information. A new filing system has been set up in the finance area where both provincial and federal children in care all have financial files. Once the Agency is able to locate more office space, the filing area, finance, statistics and resource will be relocated so that all files will be more centralized.

### 3.5 Staff Travel/Retreats Outside the Province of Manitoba

**Recommendation** – It is recommended that a statement be included in the Policy Manual with a word of caution about the practice of holding staff retreats and annual meetings outside the Province. Given the intense scrutiny of this practice and the

public finances involved there should be a cost sharing formula in place to fund such an event.

**Agency Response**

With the exception of National Child Welfare Conferences or any developmental workshops relating to child welfare, all staff travel/working weekends/retreats will be held within the Province of Manitoba. The Agency is presently reviewing the practice of the working weekends. After follow up with staff, this could potentially change. As per the staff retreat, it has been postponed to try and find a location within Manitoba.

### 3.6 Salaries of Staff and Management

**Recommendation** – It is recommended that the Agency support the principle of an equal salary for all employees based on equal qualifications and equal work responsibilities.

**Agency Response**

The new salary scale was implemented in July, 2006 and as of this fiscal year all staff are on the new scale. With the Cost of Living Allowance included with the Agency's operating funding, staff will receive an increment providing their performance appraisals recommend the increase.

### 3.7 Employee Loans/Advances

**Recommendation** - It is recommended that the Agency refrain from using federal funds for employee loans/advances as this practice is in direct contravention of the comprehensive funding arrangement with INAC, as per clause 2.5.1 of PART C - ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK which states "The Agency shall not make loans from funds transferred under this Arrangement."

**Agency Response**

No response as this recommendation was inserted into the final report after meeting with the Agency management and Board.

## 7. ACTION PLAN

It is recommended that the Agency develop an Action Plan to ensure that the recommendations are carried out in a timely manner. This plan can be outlined in two specific phases:

### A. Short – Term Action Plan: (one - four months)

1. The commitment of the present Executive Director and Board to lead the Agency in implementing the required changes must be determined. There must be a firm

commitment from the Board to address the governance, service delivery issues and financial matters. It is recommended that the Northern Authority appoint an Administrator to manage the day-to-day affairs of the Agency. The Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Authority and the Administrator will immediately meet with the current Executive Director and Board to determine their on-going responsibilities within the Agency. There are clear indications that the service model in place in the Agency is broke and must be re-shaped to ensure that children and families are receiving appropriate services.

**Agency Response**

Northern Authority and the Board met on May 27, 2008. At that time it was discussed that an Administrator will be working alongside with the Executive Director and the Board of Directors. This person will be working with the Executive Director to ensure the recommendations are followed through and the action plan is done.

2. A meeting of all staff will be convened to discuss the contents of the Review Report and time line the recommendations.

**Agency Response**

A staff meeting was held on Wednesday, June 11th, at which time the Northern Authority will give an update to the employees as to the contents of the Section 4 Review and the recommendations. Discussions will entail as to what is expected of the Board, management and workers.

3. It is imperative that a process be outlined by the Board to respond to the changes identified in governance issues.

**Agency Response**

As per discussions/meetings with the Board of Directors and the Northern Authority, the Board has no problem complying with issues outlined in the Review. However, as per the request of the Board, a meeting needs to be set up between the six (6) agencies' Board of Directors and the Northern Authority to standardize all By-Laws and Agency policies and procedures manuals. Until all Boards are operating under the same guidelines, the present policies, guidelines and travel rates will remain the same. It is suggested that a session be set up for September, 2008.

4. An intervention team must be immediately assigned by the Northern Authority to work with the Agency to address the service delivery issues in the critical areas of intake and foster care.

**Agency Response**

In conjunction with the Northern Authority, the Agency will address the current backlog of 459 cases. Of this amount, 81 cases are Child Protection (31 ready for conclusion at

intake level and 50 opened). At the DIA level, there are 119 opened cases, 5 new intakes, and 254 ready for conclusion. The current supervisor will print out a log of all outstanding cases that need to be closed off. With the additional resources provided by the Northern Authority, the supervisor and staff will identify those cases that need closing or need to be transferred to a case worker. The case worker will follow up with those cases and report back to the supervisor, at which time they may be closed off. It is estimated that it will take approximately one to three months to complete this project, depending on the number of files that require follow up.

5. The proposed organizational structure must be re-visited and changed to ensure that the structure reflects the needs of the staff and supports their initiatives in providing a level of quality services.

**Agency Response**

The Agency structure will be re-visited and changed to ensure that the structure reflects the needs of the staff and supports their initiatives in providing a level of quality service. However, this will not be changed immediately. With the additional staffing positions coming on board over the next few months, a more detailed plan of action will have to be implemented. Therefore, the Agency is proposing that a new organizational chart will be completed by mid-August and will be forwarded to the Northern Authority at such time.

6. The Agency is eligible to receive funding from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada for a self evaluation in 2008/09. It is recommended that the Agency's self evaluation include some comment on the caseload/workload issues and the ratio of supervisory staff to line staff.

**Agency Response**

As the Agency is eligible to receive funding from Indian and Northern Affairs to complete a self evaluation of the Agency, an advertisement is being placed in the papers to recruit an individual to perform this task. Upon hiring the individual, a meeting will be set up with INAC, the Province and the Northern Authority to detail the expectations of the evaluation. It is the Agency's goal that this evaluation will assist in completing some of the short term goals. Completion of the evaluation, reports, etc, is targeted for late August or early September, 2008.

**B. Long-Term Action Plan: (five-ten months)**

1. The Agency should commence a process to update the existing Policy and Procedures manual to reflect the recommended changes made in the Review Report. This process must ensure some commentary on hiring of term employees, changes to per diem rates to indicate that staff at all levels of the organization will receive the same financial remuneration and confirmation of the Work Force Qualifications Standard for the hiring of new staff.

**Agency Response**

Currently, the Agency is advertising for the position of Human Resources Coordinator. This individual will work alongside management and the Executive Director to ensure that the issues brought out from the Review will be implemented and kept up to date

The Agency has just placed an advertisement for this position – so by the time the ad runs, and interviews are completed, this person should be starting the first week of July. Some of the items requiring immediate attention and follow up will be updating the job descriptions and ensuring confirmation of the Work Force Qualification Standards for the hiring of new staff; updating policies to reflect the recommended changes by the Review – specifically the hiring process, and travel. Expected date of completion for these specific items would be in September 2008.

2. The Agency must support a comprehensive training plan as identified in a needs assessment to be carried out in consultation with the Northern Authority.

**Agency Response**

Once the Human Resources Coordinator is in place, he/she will work with management and the Northern Authority in seeking comprehensive training for all staff. A schedule of available training should be available by the beginning of September, and will be forwarded to applicable parties.

3. Given the findings of the file and service delivery review, the Northern Authority must take the lead role in conducting a comprehensive quality assurance review of children in care, foster care and intake services.

**Agency Response**

The comprehensive quality assurance review of children in care, foster care and intake services is beyond the Agency's control. While we have no problem participating and complying with the requests associated with the Review, this long term goal should not be listed under the Agency, but rather that of the Northern Authority.

4. A further review must be conducted in six months to evaluate the status of the implementation of the recommendations.

**Agency Response**

The request to have the review conducted in six months to evaluate the status of the implementation of the recommendations will be completed by the Administrator, who has been assigned by the Northern Authority to work with the Agency's Executive Director. Again, this is beyond the control of the Agency, and should fall under the Northern Authority.

5. The Agency must pursue alternate/expanded office space for all staff working out of the main office. The present space allocation is not conducive to enabling staff to carry out their jobs in an effective manner.

**Agency Response**

The Agency agrees that the present office space is not adequate for the amount of staff we have. However, the Agency had previously submitted a proposal in which they asked for extra funding to obtain alternate office space. At this time, there has been no commitment from the funding bodies to assist in this matter. The Agency will continue to look for affordable office space for the staff.

## APPENDIX A

CASELOAD – WORKLOAD

STAFFING

| | | PRESENT - ADMIN | PRESENT - DIRECT SERVICE | REQUESTED - NEW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Finance | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. | Human Resources | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 3. | DIA | 3 | 3 (includes Coord) | 3 |
| 4. | Legal Support | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. | Foster Care | 1 | 2 (includesCoord) | 3 |
| 6. | Resource Support | | 2 (includes Coord) | 2 |
| 7. | Child Protection | 1 | 2 (includes Coord) | 1 |
| 8. | Adoptions | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 9. | Federal caseload | 7 | 12 | 2 |
| 10. | Provincial caseload | 1 | 7 | 5 |
| 11. | MCCN | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| 12. | Winnipeg | 1 | 10 (includes Coord) | 1 |
| | **TOTAL** | **28** | **44** | **21 *** |

*** 17 - DS**
**4 - ADM**

**Caseload**
**CHILDREN – IN – CARE** (February 2008)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **A.** | **Federal cases** | **141** |
| **B.** | **Provincial cases** | **314** |
| | **TOTAL** | **455** |

## APPENDIX B

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND COORDINATOR – WORKER RATIO

1. Executive Director - 12 Coordinators - 1 Executive Assistant
2. Director of Finance - 10 staff
3. Human Resources (new) – 3 staff
4. DIA Coordinator – 8 staff
5. Legal support - 1 staff
6. Resource/foster Care – 5 staff
7 Resource Support Coordinator (new) – 3 staff
8. Child Protection Unit – 3 staff
9. Federal CFS Coordinator - 20 staff
10. Provincial CFS Coordinator – 11 staff (5 new)
11. MCCN Coordinator – 7 staff
12. Winnipeg – 10 staff (1 new).

## APPENDIX C

### AGREEMENT BETWEEN YOU AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Your use of the enclosed American Express® Government of Canada Travel Charge Card will be governed by this Agreement, and the agreement between you and AMEX Bank of Canada. Such card will be referred to as the "Government Designated Travel Card" or as the "Card" in this Agreement.

**IMPORTANT**
Please read this agreement thoroughly because the use of your Card will be governed by this Agreement.

**LIABILITY FOR CHARGES**
All charges are due and payable by you in full upon receipt of the monthly statement.

**USE OF GOVERNMENT DESIGNATED TRAVEL CARDS**
You have been designated by Canada to receive a Card. The Card is to be used in accordance with this Agreement, the agreement between you and AMEX Bank of Canada, and Canada's policies (e.g. Policy On Using Travellers Cheques, Travel Cards And Travel Accounts, Travel Directive, Hospitality policy, etc.). You agree to use the Card only for the purchase of authorized business travel and hospitality related expenses. Misuse of the Card may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of the cardholder. If you have any questions concerning those policies, you should contact your Departmental Senior Full Time Travel Officer. No other person is permitted to use your Card for any reason.

You will be liable to AMEX for payment of all legitimate charges made with the Card issued to you, including any incremental costs (i.e. accrued interest, administrative charges, etc.) as a result of an unpaid account. Your cash access withdrawal privileges will be automatically cancelled if your account becomes delinquent over 60 days, and your Card will be cancelled if your account becomes delinquent over 90 days. You acknowledge that for any remaining unpaid invoices over 90 days, for which you have remitted your travel expense claim within the required time frame as prescribed by policy, and for which your allowable business travel expenses have been reimbursed by your organization, Canada will initiate recovery, from any sum of money that is owed by Canada to you, including wages, to be remitted to AMEX Bank of Canada for the settlement of your unpaid invoice. Canada may also refer delinquent accounts to a private collection agency or initiate legal action for collection of the unpaid balance.

**I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS AGREEMENT**

Print Name:_____

Cardholder Signature:_____ Date:_____

## APPENDIX D

### *COMPANY CREDIT CARDS*

**OVERVIEW:**

Certain employees are permitted to use the company credit card where the nature of their job requires such use.

One type of credit card specifically used by the Agency is a general credit card such as Visa.

General credit cards are most often used by traveling employees (specifically the Executive Director) who must pay for meals, hotels, gas and other expenses related to their travel and the performance of his/her function in multiple locations. Any travel expenses charged to the visa will not be accounted/reimbursed for on the expense claim. This card enables the employee to separate personal from business expenses and assist with itemized accounting for those expenses. The use of the credit card is controlled through credit limits and authorization processes surrounding the payment of credit card invoices.

For the Executive Director, it is common practice to accept the credit card statement with written explanations and with receipts attached as sufficient documentation.

The need to maintain adequate documentation applies to expenses incurred with credit cards as for any other disbursements. In particular, GST rules require that appropriate receipts be retained: a credit card slip without supporting information is not sufficient. It is important to ensure that similar approval processes are in place for credit card disbursements as for other disbursements.

## *COMPANY CREDIT CARDS*

### POLICY

Specific employees shall be given access to a company credit card where the nature of their job requires such use.
Company credit cards may only be used for Agency expenses and may not be used for expenses of a personal nature.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Statement of Policy and Procedure is to ensure that company credit cards are used for appropriate purposes and that adequate controls are established for day-to-day use.

### SCOPE

The Company Credit Cards policy applies to the Executive Director and any employee who maintains a credit card for company use, and the Finance Department.

### RESPONSIBILITY

Individuals holding Company Credit Cards are responsible for:
- Using the cards for their intended purposes.
- Retaining receipts and providing explanations for all company credit card transactions. - Obtaining authorization for credit card invoices.

The Finance Department is responsible for:
- Ensuring that all credit card transactions are properly authorized.
- Processing payments for credit card invoices on a timely basis to avoid late payment charges.
- Arranging credit card or transaction levels limits for individual cards.

### DEFINITIONS

"**General Credit Card**" means a credit card that can be used at multiple establishments, such as Visa.

"**Transaction level limit**" means the total value of any individual transaction that may be charged to the card or the type of transaction that may be charged to the card.

**PROCEDURES**

**Use of Credit Cards and Expense Reports**

a) Credit cards are to be used for Agency requirements only.

b) Employees must retain and initial receipts and note the purpose of the expense on the back of each receipt.

c) Use of company credit cards for expense of a personal nature of any kind may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**Credit Card Invoicing, Authorization and Payment**

a) The employee shall submit the corresponding receipts and the credit card invoice to the Finance Department.

b) Charges for items where the receipt has been misplaced must be explained to the authorizing individual who must initial the specific charge and indicate, "Receipt missing" beside it.

c) The authorizing individual will confirm that the charges are justified before authorizing the invoice for payment by noting, "Okay to pay" and signing the body of the invoice.

d) The approved invoice will be forwarded to the Finance Clerk for payment.

e) The Finance Clerk shall verify the authorization and schedule the invoice for payment according to the terms of the credit card contract, and so as to avoid any unnecessary late payment charges.

***VISA CREDIT CARD AGREEMENT***
***BETWEEN***
***CREE NATION CHILD & FAMILY CARING AGENCY***
***&***

_____
The employee

Your use of the enclosed Agency Visa Card will be governed by this Agreement and the agreement between you and the Bank of Nova Scotia. Such card will be referred to as the "Card" in this Agreement.

***PLEASE READ THE AGREEMENT THOROUGHLY BECAUSE THE USE OF YOUR CARD WILL BE GOVERNED BY THIS AGREEMENT.***

***USE OF AGENCY CREDIT CARDS***:

You have been designated to receive an Agency Credit card. The Credit card is to be used in accordance with this agreement, the agreement between you and the Bank of Nova Scotia, and the Agency's finance policy. As per the finance policy, you agree to use the Card only for the purchase of Agency related expenses. As per policy, misuse of the Card may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. If you have any questions regarding any of the above policies, please contact the Director of Finance & Administration. No other person is permitted to use your Card for any reason.

You will be liable for payment for all charges made without receipts. All other charges pertaining to Agency business will be processed via the finance office, provided all receipts are submitted. Your cash access withdrawal privileges will be automatically cancelled if your account becomes delinquent over 60 days, and your Card may be cancelled. The Agency may initiate recovery of any sum of monies owed by you to the Agency by withholding a portion of your wages.

***I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT :***

_____
***(NAME)***

_____ _____
***CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE*** ***DATE***